THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Natural Inclination in Aquinas

A DISSERTATION

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By

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In *Summa theologiae* I-II.94.2, St. Thomas Aquinas says that “the precepts of the natural law follow upon the order of the natural inclinations.” This statement has generated much controversy, but little discussion of what the term “natural inclination” *(inclinatio naturalis)* means. This dissertation is a study of Aquinas’s use of that term in 94.2 and throughout the corpus.

Chapter I is a study of the terms *inclinatio* and *inclinare*. It distinguishes these terms from their English cognates “inclination” and “incline,” examines Aquinas’s use of *inclinare* in the sense of a lawgiver’s “inclining” his subjects towards an end, and distinguishes natural inclinations from other inclinations.

Chapter II investigates the sources of Aquinas’s natural inclination language and threefold schema of inclinations in 94.2 and argues that natural inclination provides the “linchpin” that holds together the divergent, yet authoritative, natural law definitions of Gratian, Cicero, and Ulpian.

Chapter III contrasts Aquinas’s use of the term *natura* with prevalent senses of the English word “nature,” argues that natural inclination in the sense proper to natural law is the inclination of human nature as a rational-animal composite, and argues that the “order” of the natural inclinations is within nature, not imposed by reason.
Chapter IV discusses Aquinas’s use of *naturalis* with regard to human beings, in contrast to prevalent senses of “natural” in modern English. It discusses man’s natural inclination to virtue as an example of the “humanly natural.”

Chapter V examines natural inclination in relation to natural evil, fallen nature, sinful inclination, and reason’s governance of unruly human inclinations.

Chapter VI discusses how natural inclination is related to appetites and their objects. It shows that the acts of the sensitive and rational appetites are distinct from, but rooted in, “natural appetite.”

Chapter VII explains how natural inclination is both an intrinsic disposition following upon form and an extrinsic inclining of the created nature by God. It discusses natural inclination in terms of Aquinas’s notions of divine direction by “impression,” divine art, natural intentionality, and divine cognition of the ends of nature.

An appendix provides an “Index of Natural Inclinations According to St. Thomas Aquinas.”
This dissertation by Sean B. Cunningham fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in philosophy approved by Kevin White, Ph.D., as Director, and by Richard F. Hassing, Ph.D., and Tobias Hoffmann, Ph.D., as Readers.

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To Joanna
Et qui exaudit primo audit; ideo dicit, *Inclina*, nisi Dominus sit in alto loco, oportet quod inclinet aurem ad audiendum illum qui est in imo. Dominus sedet in maiestate sua; et si vellet nostra agere secundum altitudinem suae iustitiae, non salvaremur . . . .

— St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Psalmo 16*
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ABBREVIATIONS

Texts of Thomas Aquinas

Comp. theol. Compendium theologiae
De carit. Quaestio disputata de caritate
De ente De ente et essentia
De malo Quaestiones disputatae de malo
De mot. cord. De motu cordis
De pot. Quaestiones disputatae de potentia
De prin. nat. De principiis naturae
De sort. De sortibus
De spe Quaestio disputata de spe
De spir. creat. Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis
De sub. sep. De substantiis separatis
De unit. int. De unitate intellectus
De ver. Quaestiones disputatae de veritate
De virt. card. Quaestio disputata de virtutibus cardinalibus
De virt. comm. Quaestio disputata de virtutibus in communi
In I Cor. Super primam epistolam ad Corinthios lectura
In De anima Sentencia libri De anima
In De caelo In libros Aristotelis De caelo
In De div. nom. In librum Beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus expositio
In De hebd. Expositio libri Boetii De eubodadibus
In De Trin. Super Boetium De Trinitate
In De mem. Sentencia libri De memoria et reminiscencia
In De sensu Sentencia libri De sensu et sensato
In Ephes. Super epistolam ad Ephesios lectura
In Ethic. Sententia libri Ethicorum
In Hebr. Super Epistolam S. Pauli Apostoli ad Hebraeos
In Iob Expositio super Iob ad litteram
In Lib. de caus. Super librum de causis
In Meta. In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio
In Meteor. Expositio in libros Meteorologicorum
In Perierm. Expositio libri Peryerminas
In Phys. In VIII libros Physicorum
In Polit. Sententia libri Politicorum
In Post. an. Expositio libri Posteriorum
In Ps. Postilla super Psalmos
In Rom. Super Epistolam S. Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos
In Sent. Scriptum super libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi
Lect. super Ioan. Lectura super evangelium Ioannis
Lect. super Matth. Lectura super Matthaeum
Quaes. disp. de an. Quaestiones disputatae de anima
Editions of Thomas Aquinas


Marietti Opera omnia. Turin/Rome: Marietti (dates vary).


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INTRODUCTION

In the *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, St. Thomas Aquinas states, “According to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law” (*Secundum ordinem inclinationum naturalium, est ordo praeceptorum legis naturae*). The contemporary literature on St. Thomas’s natural law theory includes many discussions of the relationship between the natural inclinations and the natural law. However, there is relatively little discussion in this literature of the term *inclinatio naturalis*, its philosophical signification, or its historical origins. Many scholars simply translate *inclinatio naturalis* as “natural inclination,” which they take to be synonymous with terms such as “urge” and “drive.”

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1 *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170].
4 See, e.g., John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, 380.
But can the scholar of St. Thomas’s natural law writings safely assume that *inclinatio* and *natura* in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 have the same meanings as their English cognates, “inclination” and “nature”? In this dissertation, I seek to show (1) that the answer to this question is “no”; (2) how St. Thomas’s *inclinatio naturalis* is different from “natural inclination”; (3) what St. Thomas mean by *inclinatio naturalis*, particularly in the natural law context, and (4) why, as a historical and philosophical matter, he uses this term in q. 94, a. 2, rather than some other common scholastic term (e.g., *instinctus* or *appetitus*).

For traditional “Thomistic” natural law theory, the stakes are high. If “natural inclination” is not, or cannot be, distinguished from non-natural or unnatural inclinations, or if the term is taken in a brutally biologicist (and nonteleological) sense, there are serious consequences. As discussed below, a number of relatively recent scholars have taken the measure of St. Thomas’s natural law theory in terms of modern understandings of nature and have found it wanting. To the extent it depends on an Aristotelian physics or cosmology, it is thought to be obsolete. Leo Strauss, for example, says, “Natural right in its classic form is connected with a teleological view of the universe. . . . The teleological view of the universe, of which the teleological view of man forms a part, would seem to have been destroyed by modern natural science.” Absent natural teleology, human teleology is either reduced to “desires or impulses” or preserved by means of “a fundamental, typically modern, dualism of a nonteleological natural science and a teleological science of man.” The latter approach, Strauss claims, is the position “the modern followers of Thomas Aquinas, among others, are forced to

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5 I take Ralph McInerny and Russell Hittinger to be representative of the “traditional” Thomistic natural law view, which recognizes natural teleology as an essential component and substrate of natural law moral philosophy. See, e.g., Ralph McInerny, *Ethica Thomistica* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1987); Russell Hittinger, *Critique of the New Natural Law Theory*. 
take, a position which presupposes a break with the comprehensive view of Aristotle as well as that of Thomas Aquinas himself.”

A. “Natural Inclination” and the “Dangerous Senses” of Words

St. Thomas writes that “words are usually twisted away (detorqueantur) from their original meaning to signify something else.” He is not speaking pejoratively. The “twisting” need not be a perversion, and it can be difficult to determine who is doing the twisting, or for what purpose. But the key lesson for the exegete is to recognize that a word may have undergone a shift in meaning, which could have drastic results for interpretation of a text that uses the word. In some cases, a word ceases to have its original meaning at all. For example, in Latin, desiderium (“desire”) has long shed its original meaning, “of the stars” (de siderium). Likewise, in German, Gift, which originally had the same meaning as its English cognate “gift,” now means, exclusively, “poison.”

The twisting of words becomes especially problematic when we consider the shift in meaning from one language to a cognate form of the same word in another language. For example, as we shall see in Chapter I, in modern usage, the dominant sense of the English term

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7 *ST* II-II, q. 57, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 9.4]: “consuetum est quod nomina a sui prima impositione detorqueantur ad alia significanda.”
8 The context of this statement is St. Thomas’s description of the “derivation” (derivatio) of the word ius from its original meaning, “the just thing,” to its later meaning, “the art by which what is just is known” (artem qua cognoscitur quid sit iustum), in the same way that “medicine,” first meaning the remedy given to a sick person, is later applied to the medical art. Ibid. My use of italics for Latin words, but quotes for English words, follows the usage of John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), n. 213. This usage shows the contrast between Latin and English better than rendering all words in italics.
10 Etymologically, Gift and “gift” are cognates inasmuch as they share the same root as evidenced by Gothic and Old High German verb forms meaning “gift” or “to give.” See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) (“OED”), s.vv. “give” and “gift.” Yet they are what lexicographers call “false friends” because the German word has undergone a drastic semantic shift—a distortion indeed, in St. Thomas’s terms.
“instinct” is “innate impulse,” especially in animals, understood as being within the creature. But in classical Latin, *instinctus* means chiefly an external prompting, an “instigation” or “inspiration” from outside the creature (as by a god or a demon acting upon a man or animal), a sense which the English word “instinct” also formerly had. The dominant senses of these distorted terms in modern English are what C. S. Lewis calls “dangerous senses because they lure us into misreading,” which is to say, they lure us into misreading earlier works in which the word in question, or its cognate, had a different meaning. As Lewis warns, “The dominant sense of any word lies uppermost in our minds. Wherever we meet the word, our natural impulse will be to give it that sense. . . . We are often deceived.”

We think we know what the words “nature” and “inclination” mean. “Nature” means the realm of “the physical” and “the primitive,” as distinct from the realm of human reason and its contrivances. “Inclination” and “inclining,” outside of certain geometrical contexts (“inclined planes,” etc.), means an end-directed “tendency” towards something, a “preference,” or a “predisposition,” e.g., “I am rather inclined to believe that this is the land God gave to Cain,” as the explorer Jacques Cartier said of North America. As applied to nature, therefore, “inclination” is purely figurative. For example, in the case of the stone’s natural inclination to fall towards the center of the earth, such “inclination” does not mean that the stone is thinking, “I should like to fall to the ground today,” and desiring to do so accordingly. To say that the stone has a natural inclination is to use a convenient, metaphorical shorthand for the motion of a body according to the laws of physics. Also, with regard to animals, there is no deliberate, end-directed inclining. Rather, the natural inclination of an animal is *really* something more like an

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12 Ibid.
“urge,” “drive,” “impulse” or, in the strictly modern sense, “instinct.” Very well, then; surely St. Thomas means something like an urge when he says *inclinatio naturalis*.

This dominant sense of “natural inclination” seems to “lie uppermost” in the minds of many scholars of Thomistic natural law today. As noted, in the vast literature on the relationship between the natural law and “the natural inclinations” in St. Thomas’s natural law theory, there is surprisingly little discussion of what the term *inclinatio naturalis* means in philosophical or historical context. By default, natural inclinations are characterized in empirical terms as “urges” or “drives” without further specification. These urges, in turn, are portrayed as biological or psychological data which must be worked on by practical reason before they have moral significance. Little attention is given to the question of which inclinations are *natural* for man. Natural inclinations are lumped in with all observable human tendencies or desires. John Finnis, for example, speaks of “inclinations and urges” generally; he even says there is no need to determine which of these inclinations are more or less “natural.” In this view, “the inclinations” (whatever they may be) must be ordered or kept in check by something else—practical reason, perhaps, or free will—as if reason and will were separate from nature. Whether an inclination is natural is, in any event, regarded as unimportant.

But this “unruly urge” stereotype of natural inclination fails to account for the many *inclinationes naturales* that Aquinas attributes to man. He applies the term *inclinatio naturalis* to a startling variety of things. Consider the following. Two are well known: the natural inclinations

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14 There are fifty-five cases of *inclinatio* or *inclinare* in the series of questions known as the “treatise on law,” mostly in connection with *natura*. See, e.g., *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]; q. 90, pr. [Leon. 7.149]; q. 90, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 7.149]; q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154]; q. 93, a. 6 [Leon. 7.166-7]; q. 101, a. 3 [Leon. 7.225]; q. 107, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 7.279]; q. 108, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 7.284].

15 “There is no need to consider whether these urges are more, or less, ‘natural’ (in terms of frequency, universality, intensity, etc.) . . . .” John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 91.
to know the truth about God and to avoid ignorance.\textsuperscript{16} St. Thomas also speaks of natural inclinations to act in accord with reason (which means, he adds, to act in accord with virtue) and to contemplate rational truth.\textsuperscript{17} He speaks of natural inclinations that apply to a very broad field, such as the natural inclination to do those things that are consonant with the Eternal Law.\textsuperscript{18} There are also natural inclinations that are very specific, for example, the natural inclinations to keep agreements and to give safe passage to enemy legates.\textsuperscript{19}

Other natural inclinations are freighted with theological significance. These include the natural inclinations of man to offer sacrifice to God,\textsuperscript{20} to confess his sins in the proper place, to the right person, and in the right manner;\textsuperscript{21} to observe the Sabbath;\textsuperscript{22} to love his enemies;\textsuperscript{23} and to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} \textit{ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]}: “homo habet naturalem inclinationem ad hoc quod veritatem cognoscat de Deo, et ad hoc quod in societate vivat. Et secundum hoc, ad legem naturalem pertinent ea quae ad huius modi inclinationem spectant, utpote quod homo ignorantiam vitet, quod alios non offendat cum quibus debet conversari, et cetera huiusmodi quae ad hoc spectant.”
\item \textsuperscript{17} \textit{ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170]} (reason and virtue: “cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis, naturalis inclinatione inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem. Et hoc est agere secundum virtutem”); \textit{In VII Ethic.}, lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:165-8] (contemplation of truth: “natura tamen omnes inclinat in eandem delectationem sicut in optimam, puta in contemplationem intelligibilis veritatis, secundum quod omnes homines natura scire desiderant”).
\item \textsuperscript{18} \textit{ST I-II, q. 93, a. 6 [Leon. 7.166]}: “unicuique rationali creaturae inest naturalis inclinatione ad id quod est consonum legi aeternae.”
\item \textsuperscript{19} \textit{In V Ethic.}, lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:68-73]. The context is the natural inclination to do the things that are required by the \textit{ius gentium}: “Illum . . . ius, quod consequitur propriam inclinationem naturae humanae, inquantum scilicet homo est rationale animal, vocant ius gentium, quae omnes gentes utuntur, sicut quod pactas inservanda, quod legati etiam apud hostes instituti, et alia huiusmodi.” The \textit{ius gentium} comprises those things that are derived from the natural law as conclusions from principles. \textit{ST I-II, q. 95, a. 4 [Leon. 7.178]}: “ad ius gentium pertinent ea quae derivantur ex lege naturae sicut conclusiones ex principiis, ut iustae emptiones, venditiones, et alia huiusmodi, sine quibus homines ad invicem convivere non possent.”
\item \textsuperscript{20} \textit{ST II-II, q. 85 a. 1 [Leon. 9.215-16].}
\item \textsuperscript{21} \textit{In IV Sent.}, d. 17, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, ad 1 [Moos 4.897]: “ad confessionem veri debito modo faciendam ubi oportet et cui oportet, in generali inclinat ratio naturalis; et secundum hoc confessio est de jure naturali.”
\item \textsuperscript{22} \textit{ST II-II, q. 122, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 9.478].}
\item \textsuperscript{23} \textit{De carit.}, a. 8, ad 7 [Marietti 775]: “ex natura, homo omnem hominem diligit, ut etiam philosophus dicit in VIII Ethic. Sed quod aliquid sit inimicum, est ex aliquo quod naturae superadditur, ex quo non debet tolli naturae inclinatione. Caritas ergo, dum ad dilectionem inimicum movet, perficit naturalem inclinationem; secus autem est de illis quae habent contrarietatem ex sua natura, sicut ignis et aqua, lupus et ovis.”
\end{itemize}
“hope” for a good proportionate to his nature (as distinct from theological hope for the beatific vision through grace).  

Still other natural inclinations of man today seem obscure or repugnant to Enlightenment sensibilities, such as the following: to use the term “both” (ambo) in reference to two things but “all” (omnes) in reference to three or more things;  

to dig a grave and to seek a treasure, but not to find a treasure while digging a grave;  

to want to know the future by human means (but not by divination);  

to repress (deprimere) those who rise up against him;  

and to love his father more than his son;  

of slaves, to have bodies that are suited for digging up fields;  

and of women, to take better care of their hair than men.
But perhaps the text that most clearly defies the inclination-as-urge stereotype is the one in which Aquinas says that natural inclination is “something divine” (quiddam divinum) in man.\textsuperscript{32} Even more, in one text, he seems to say that, in some sense, God has a natural inclination: he cites Augustine’s proposition that “God necessarily lives” (Deum de necessitate vivere) as an illustration of the “necessity of natural inclination.”\textsuperscript{33}

How can any of these “inclinations” be called “natural”? One suspects that the English cognate terms “nature,” “natural,” and “inclination” are “dangerous words” which, as Lewis warns, could lure us into misreading St. Thomas’s discussion of the natural inclinations in \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 2.\textsuperscript{34} There is indeed grave danger here. In his essay \textit{On Nature}, John Stuart Mill identifies what could be called two of the most dangerous senses of “nature” in English. “Nature,” according to Mill, means either (1) “the entire system of things . . . [and] all their properties” or (2) “things as they would be, apart from human intervention.”\textsuperscript{35} In either sense, the Stoic notion of “following nature” is “irrational and immoral.” If nature is everything that happens, then we have no power to do anything other than follow nature. If nature is the “spontaneous course” of things, then our moral duty is “not to follow nature, but to amend it.”\textsuperscript{36}

In this vein, Mill, an Englishman, claims that Southern Europeans have a “natural inclination” to

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{In I Cor.} [rep. reg.], cap. 11, vs. 14 (NI of woman to take care of her hair by covering her head). This NI is premised on a more basic inclination: the natural inclination of women to wear their hair long. \textit{In I Cor.} [rep. vulg.], cap. 11, lect. 2, n. 619 [Marietti, 1.350] (NI of woman to have long hair and take care of her hair).

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{De ver.} q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.623:151-52]


\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
“cruelty” which should be kept in check by reason.\textsuperscript{37} Are these the relevant meanings of \textit{natura} and \textit{naturalis} in Aquinas’s natural law?\textsuperscript{38}

If, wrenching these terms from the context of St. Thomas’s teleological philosophy of human nature, we understand “nature” as the violent and gory realm of the irrational creatures, or “inclination” as the subjective proclivity of an individual or brute “urge” in a behaviorist sense, we have already missed the point (indeed, the \textit{finis}) of St. Thomas’s terms \textit{natura} and \textit{inclinatio}. In doing so, we are in danger of also missing the point of the \textit{lex naturae}, inasmuch as its precepts “follow on the order of the natural inclinations.”

Scholars of St. Thomas’s natural law ethics may be understandably anxious for answers to weightier questions (e.g., Is natural law, properly speaking, law? Is the natural law “derived” from the order of the natural inclinations?). Yet impatience with the seemingly small matter of St. Thomas’s natural inclination terminology can lead to fundamental errors in the exegesis of his natural law writings. This dissertation will attempt to show that the meaning of St. Thomas’s natural inclination language is not a small matter and to provide the clarification needed in order to forestall such errors.

\textbf{B. The \textit{Locus classicus} of Natural Inclination: \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 2}

In \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 2, St. Thomas considers the question of whether the natural law “contains many precepts, or only one.”\textsuperscript{39} In the heart of his discussion of this question, he writes,

\begin{quote}
the good has the \textit{ratio} of an end, but evil the \textit{ratio} of a contrary; whence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, reason naturally apprehends as goods, and consequently as things to be pursued, and the contraries of those things as evils to be avoided.\textsuperscript{40}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 82.
\textsuperscript{38} St. Thomas does sometimes use \textit{natura} and \textit{naturalis} to mean bodies in contrast to reason or man in an unimproved state. For example, both liberty and nudity are natural for man. \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 7.172].
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 2, arg. 1 [Leon. 7.170]: “contineat plura praecepta, sed unum tantum.”
From these premises, he concludes, “According therefore to the order of the natural inclinations (inclinationes naturales) is the order of the precepts of the law of nature.” He then describes a threefold inclination of man according to three different “natures”:

Because there is first an inclination in man [inclinatio homini] to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances [secundum naturam in qua communicat cum omnibus substantiis], inasmuch as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature: and by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of preserving human life, and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law.

Secondly, there is an inclination in man to things that pertain to him more specially, according to that nature which he has in common with other animals [secundum naturam in qua communicat cum ceteris animalibus]; and according to this inclination, those things are said to belong to the natural law, “which nature has taught to all animals,” such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring and so forth.

Thirdly, there is an inclination of man to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him [secundum naturam rationis, quae est sibi propria]. Thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society; and in this respect, whatever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law, for instance, to shun ignorance, to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things regarding the above inclination.

This text gives the reader a preliminary notion of what a natural inclination is. It seems to be a tendency which men, or perhaps at least most men, have by nature toward some determinate end:

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40 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “Quia vero bonum habet rationem finis, malum autem rationem contrarii, inde est quod omnia illa ad quae homo habet naturalem inclinationem, ratio naturaliter apprehendit ut bona, et per consequens ut opere prosequenda, et contraria eorum ut mala et vitanda.”

41 Ibid.: “Secundum igitur ordinem inclinationum naturalium, est ordo praeceptorum legis naturae.” For the meaning of “precept,” which includes prohibitions, see ST I-II, q. 92, a. 2, ad 1 [Leon. 7.161]. Cf. Quadlibet VII, q. 7 a. 1 [Leon. 25/1.35-37:133-230] (distinguishing between precepts that bind the individual and those that bind the species).

42 I have added the spaces between the text describing each “level” of inclination. ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “Inest enim primo inclinatio homini ad bonum secundum naturam in qua communicat cum omnibus substantiis, prout scilicet quaelibet substantia appetit conservationem sui esse secundum suam naturam. Et secundum hanc inclinationem, pertinent ad legem naturalem ea per quae vita hominis conservatur, et contrarium impeditur. Secundo inest homini inclinationi ad aliquam magis specialia, secundum naturam in qua communicat cum ceteris animalibus. Et secundum hoc, dicuntur ea esse de lege naturali quae natura omnia animalia docuit, ut est coniunctio maris et feminae, et educatio liberorum, et similia. Tertio modo inest homini inclinationi ad bonum secundum naturam rationis, quae est sibi propria, sicut homo habet naturalem inclinationem ad hoc quod veritatem cognoscat de Deo, et ad hoc quod in societate vivat. Et secundum hoc, ad legem naturalem pertinent ea quae ad huiusmodi inclinationem spectant, utpote quod homo ignorantiam vitet, quod alios non offendat cum quibus debet conversari, et cetera huiusmodi quae ad hoc spectant.” The expression “natura omnia animalia docuit” is a quote from the Roman Jurist Ulpian, Dig. I.1.1.3, Theodor Mommsen and Paul Krueger, eds., The Digest of Justinian, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 1. See Chapter II for discussion of this language.
self-preservation, marital union for the sake of children, and life in society, and knowing the truth about God. Already the notion of natural inclination as a blind, irrational urge of a biological character seems suspect—Do cormorants want to know the truth about anything?\(^\text{43}\) and there will be much more to say about that.

Three features of this text are particularly important to grasp for purposes of understanding *inclinatio naturalis* correctly. First, St. Thomas is talking about human nature. The things to which “man has a natural inclination” (*homo habet naturalem inclinationem*) are plural, but the subject of these inclinations is one: *homo*. Thus, at each level, St. Thomas says “there is in man an inclination” (*inest . . . inclinatio hominis* or *inest hominis inclinatio*).\(^\text{44}\) We see, then, that each of these several inclinations is the inclination of a single subject: a man, considered as human.

Second, it seems at first that there are three different natures in play in this text: the nature man has in common with all substances, the nature he has in common with all animals, and the nature that is proper to him. Chapter III discusses this point at length. As a preliminary matter, it should be noted that, within the series of questions known as the “treatise on law” (*ST* I-II, qq. 90-108), St. Thomas frequently refers to “human nature” (*natura humana*) or “the nature

\(^{43}\) St. Thomas notes that the cormorant (*mergulus*), a type of duck, by nature has the ability to remain for a long time under water. *ST* I-II, q. 102, a. 6, ad 1 [Leon. 7.249]: “Mergulus autem, cuius natura est ut sub undis diutius immoretur.”

\(^{44}\) Although the word “inest” (“there is in”) suggests the translation, “there is in man an inclination,” it should be noted that *hominis* is dative, not ablative or accusative. Although the Latin preposition *in* takes the ablative or accusative, the word *insum* in its tropological sense (“to be contained in, to be in, to belong or appertain to”) can have a dative construction. Lewis & Short, s.v. “insum,” citing Cic. *Off.* 1.2 (“quibus artibus prudentia major inest”) and Sall. C. 23.2 (“huic homini non minor veritas inerat”). Cf. *In II Sent.*, d. 28, q. 1, a. 1 [Mand. 2.718] (“inest homini inclinatio ad appetendum per se desiderabilia et honesta”); *In III Sent.*, d. 36, q. 1, a. 1 [Moos 3.1215-17] (“Inest enim homini inclinatio quaedam naturalis ad actum prudentiae, quae virtus naturalis dicitur”).
of man” (*natura hominis*). This human nature is the nature that is common to all men and that, in important ways, man has in common with all substances and animals. Throughout this dissertation, I refer to the threefold inclination of this human nature in terms of three “levels” or “layers” or “tiers” of inclination. This is not to say that human nature is a high-rise apartment building, a layer cake, or a pyramid marketing scheme. It is rather, a description using the terms “level,” “layer,” and “tier” in an extended sense—not uncommon in the natural law literature—to describe the presence of three different “grades” of being in a single human nature. Man is more perfect than the other animals because he has reason; as an animal, in turn, he is more perfect than inanimate beings because he has life.

Third, it is clear in the context of *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 that the human nature of which St. Thomas speaks is not the distinctive set of characteristics that an individual man is born with (e.g., black or white skin, tall or short stature). Instead, “a man’s nature” in this context is the specific human nature he has according to his form, which is the same in every man:

Now each thing is inclined naturally to an operation that is suitable to it according to its form: thus fire is inclined to give heat. Wherefore, since the rational soul is the proper form of man, there is in every man a natural inclination to act according to reason.

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45 E.g., *ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 7.156]: “per naturalem legem participatur lex aeterna secundam proportionem capacitatis humanae naturae.” He also refer to the “natural love” (*naturalem dilectionem*) of man for his parents and children. *ST* I-II, q. 100, a. 5, arg. 4 [Leon. 7.210]: “homo naturalem dilectionem habet ad parentes, ita etiam ad filios.”


47 Aquinas speaks of different “grades” of being. See, e.g., *ST* I, q. 47, a. 2 [Leon. 4.487]: “mixta perfectiora sunt elementis, et plantae corporibus mineralibus, et animalia plantis, et homines alis animalibus; et in singulus horum una species perfectior aliis invenitur.”

48 *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170]: “Inclinatur autem unumquodque naturaliter ad operationem sibi convenientem secundum suam formam, sicut ignis ad calefaciendum. Unde cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis, naturalis inclinatio inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem.”
In the case of man, although his nature has several parts, he has one substantial form, the rational soul. It is according to this human nature that St. Thomas says in q. 94, a. 3 that “to the natural law belongs everything to which a man is inclined according to his nature.”

As a preliminary matter, then, we can see that the inclinationes naturales upon which the precepts of the natural law follow are inclinations (1) of man; (2) not of this or that individual man considered as an individual, but rather of each man considered as having a human nature; which is to say, (3) of human nature considered as substantial form.

C. Status quaestionis

I shall examine the state of the question of what St. Thomas means by inclinatio naturalis and, specifically, what the term means in the context of ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, in two ways: first, in terms of what has been said in the recent literature about St. Thomas’s use of the particular expression inclinatio naturalis and, second, in terms of the understanding of natural inclination in the natural law context by several authors apart from whether those authors have expressly articulated their understanding of what the expression inclinatio naturalis means.

1. Inclinatio naturalis, Term and Concept

As we have seen, inclinatio naturalis is typically translated into English by the cognate words “natural inclination.” A number of scholars recognize the problems that arise from the fact that the dominant senses of the words “natural,” “nature,” “inclination,” and “incline” in modern English are far removed from the senses in which St. Thomas uses the cognate Latin terms. Mark C. Murphy, for example, “decline[s] to translate the term inclinatio” to avoid misconstruing the

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49 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170]: “Dictum est enim quod ad legem naturae pertinet omne illud ad quod homo inclinatur secundum suam naturam.”
term in a Kantian sense.\textsuperscript{50} Alasdair MacIntyre translates the term as “directedness,” which, though awkward, properly denotes the teleological character or “purposiveness” of natural inclination, as MacIntyre describes it in a discussion of the natural inclinations.\textsuperscript{51} Anthony Lisska translates the terms inclinatio and appetitus both as “disposition” in part to avoid the subjective sense of terms such as “drive” and “appetite.”\textsuperscript{52} Yet in the English language literature, the term inclinationes naturales is almost universally translated as “natural inclinations.” In this dissertation, although I use the same common translation by default, it is my intention to show the reader that the words “natural” and “inclination,” used with reference to St. Thomas’s natural law doctrine, should (and could) have a meaning that is very different from the meanings that those terms predominantly do have in contemporary English.\textsuperscript{53}

Outside of the natural law literature, there seems to be, among Thomists and otherwise, even less discussion of inclinatio in any context. When it is discussed, it is usually in passing within discussions of appetite, motion, or impetus.\textsuperscript{54} The fact that St. Thomas’s use of inclinatio...
terms is relatively infrequent in his commentaries on Aristotle’s “physical” works, as explained in Chapters I and II, may partly explain this relative lack of discussion.

As a lexicographical matter, *inclinatio* has been a neglected step-child in comparison to a number of important, related terms. Considering that *inclin*-terms, in various inflections, appear in 2,269 cases within 1,221 places throughout the *corpus Thomisticum*, and that they stand at the heart of St. Thomas’s discussions of natural law, eternal law, and numerous discussions of appetite in the *Summa theologiae* and other works, it is noteworthy that Ludwig Schütz’s *Thomas-Lexicon* has no entry for either *inclinatio* or *inclinare*, even as it lavishes attention to certain less frequently used and arguably less distinctively Thomistic terms, such as *impetus* (450 cases) and *instinctus* (308 cases). A few lexicographical studies provides some discussion of *inclin*-terms in connection with more detailed treatments of related words, such as *appetitus*, *desiderium*, *instinctus*, and *intentio*. These studies, though they provide useful starting points for an investigation of *inclinatio naturalis*, say relatively little about the meaning of the term.
Considering that St. Thomas says natural inclination is “something divine,” the neglect of the term in the literature and lexicography of Thomistic thought is surprising.\(^{57}\)

2. Three Approaches to Natural Inclination in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2

As noted, in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, St. Thomas states that “all those things to which man has a natural inclination, reason naturally apprehends as good.” Stephen Brock notes that there has been an “astonishing” variety of interpretations of this text.\(^{58}\) Much has been written about the relationship between natural law and natural inclinations, as well as between the natural inclinations and practical reason. A comprehensive discussion of the contemporary literature on those interstitial issues would require a wide study of the Thomistic natural law thought of several major thinkers, including John Finnis, Martin Rhonheimer, Russell Hittinger, Servais Pinckaers, Jean Porter, and others. Much excellent work has been done on these authors’ interpretations of St. Thomas’s natural law theory.\(^{59}\)

My concern is narrower. I focus on the language and notion of inclinatio naturalis as it appears in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, and I address mainly those authors who focus on that very language and notion, to the extent that they do so. As noted above, MacIntyre, Lisska, and others have usefully commented on the meaning of the term inclinatio, but these comments have been brief. More significant for my purposes are certain approaches to the question of what the natural inclinations in q. 94, a. 2 are, which is to say, what the human natural inclinations—the inclinationes insunt homini—are. Brock surveys a number of interpretations of q. 94, a. 2 and divides them into two broad approaches which are, in effect, (1) his own, and (2) it seems, nearly

\(^{57}\) In VII Ethic., lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433.160-68]: “quiddam divinum.”


\(^{59}\) See, e.g., Matthew Levering, “Natural Law and Natural Inclinations,” 155-201.
everyone else’s. The approaches that Brock rejects include a broad range of thinkers as
disparate as John Finnis and Jacques Maritain, who, in Brock’s view, agree on one thing: that the
human natural inclinations are “pre-rational.”\textsuperscript{60} That is, the natural inclinations “would exist
independently of reason’s apprehension of their objects as good, and the apprehension would
somehow follow on them.”\textsuperscript{61} In my view, Brock paints with too broad a brushstroke.\textsuperscript{62} Also, he
seems to leave out entirely what I regard as the traditional Thomistic view, a view which is more
\textit{ad mentem Thomae} than any of the positions Brock identifies.

In contrast to Brock, I shall focus on three approaches to the interpretation of q. 94, a. 2.
The first is the approach of those authors whom Brock describes as holding that the natural
inclinations are “pre-rational,” using John Finnis as an example. The second is Brock’s own
view. Third is what I take to be the traditional Thomistic view, represented by Denis Bradley and

\textsuperscript{60} Adding to this list of strange bedfellows, Brock includes Martin Rhonheimer, Douglas Flippen, and Leo
Elders as sharing the assumption that the natural inclinations are pre-rational. Ibid., 58-60.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 60.
\textsuperscript{62} It is not clear how Maritain’s view is similar to Finnis’s. For one thing, Maritain distinguishes between
“genuine” and non-genuine inclinations, which is at odds with Finnis’s indiscriminate treatment of “inclinations and
92. Maritain’s natural law theory heavily relies on a concept of “knowledge by inclination,” but, as far as I have
been able to determine, he does not comment directly on St. Thomas’s use of the term \textit{inclinatio naturalis}. Maritain
does not rigorously distinguish between man’s inclinational participation and cognitive participation in natural law
(\textit{ST} I-II, q. 93, a. 6 [Leon. 7.166-7]). Rather, the cognitive element (which he calls “gnoseological”) begins at the
level of natural inclination. Men know the natural law “by” or “through” inclination. The ontological element is
human nature “functioning normally.” “Is it essential to law to be an order of reason, and natural law, or the
normality of functioning of human nature known by knowledge through inclination, is law, binding in conscience,
only because nature and the inclinations of nature manifest an order of reason, that is of Divine Reason. Natural law
is law only because it is a participation in Eternal Law.” Maritain, \textit{Natural Law: Reflections on Theory and Practice}
(South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2001), 60. The gnoseological element pertains to man’s knowledge of
natural law, but this knowledge is somehow pre-conceptual. Natural law is natural “insofar as it is naturally known,
that is known through inclination or through connaturality, not through conceptual knowledge and by way of
reasoning.” Ibid., 20. The natural inclinations proper to man are, in a way, rational, but, paradoxically, pre-
conscious: “essential inclinations of human nature . . . even if they deal with animal instincts, are essentially human,
and therefore, reason-permeated inclinations; they are inclinations refracted through the crystal of reason in its
unconscious or pre-conscious life.” Maritain, \textit{The Range of Reason} (New York: Scribner, 1952), 27. This does not
sound much like Finnis, for whom, as explained below, the naturalness of inclinations is irrelevant and any
consideration of natural law as a participation in the eternal law is an irrelevant “speculative appendage.”
others. I call these three approaches, respectively, (1) the “drives and urges school,” (2) the “psychological school,” and (3) the “natural teleology school.”

a. “Drives and urges” school: John Finnis

What, for Finnis, are the natural inclinations? He does not dwell on the question. He speaks instead of “inclinations and urges” indiscriminately. He refers, for example, to the natural inclinations as “these urges,” “basic inclinations, drives, or urges,” “a certain range of urges, drives, or inclinations,” “tendencies” (of irrational things), and “felt inclinations.” There is no need to determine which of these inclinations are more or less “natural”:

[T]here are many inclinations and urges that do not correspond to or support any basic value: for example, the inclination to take more than one’s share, or the urge to gratuitous cruelty. There is no need to consider whether these urges are more, or less, ‘natural’ (in terms of frequency, universality, intensity, etc.) than those urges which correspond to basic values by deducing from, or even by pointing to, any set of inclinations.

Finnis adds, “Without reasonable direction the inclinations will bring about individual and communal ruin.” Brock is correct to say that, for Finnis, the natural inclinations described in q. 94, a. 2 are “pre-rational.” They are not rational at all. It is not clear that the natural inclinations are even natural at all in any sense relevant to St. Thomas’s thought.

Indeed, for Finnis, the threefold order of the natural inclinations is irrelevant to natural law reasoning: “[T]he ‘natural’ is, from the point of view of [Thomas’s] ethics, a speculative appendage added by way of metaphysical reflection.” That is to say, it is an appendage to the

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63 Finnis, Natural Law and Natural Rights, 91.
64 Ibid., 91, 380, 400, and 403.
65 “There is no need to consider whether these urges are more, or less, ‘natural’ (in terms of frequency, universality, intensity, etc.) . . .” Ibid., 91.
66 Ibid., 91.
67 Ibid., 380.
68 Ibid., 36.
proper and self-sufficient analysis of natural law in terms of practical reasoning and human experience of the “basic goods.”69

Statements of this sort have prompted a veritable cottage industry of Thomistic anti-Finnis literature, which shows that Finnis’s natural law theory is a stark departure from St. Thomas’s. Pamela Hall claims Finnis’s theory is a sort of “natural law without nature.”70 As explained in Chapter II, it is more accurate to say that Finnis accepts a fundamentally different, modern concept of nature and attempts to work around it. Finnis seems to be laboring with the contraints of a certain English philosophical tradition. In support of his own view, Finnis quotes Hume as follows:

Look round this universe. . . . The whole presents nothing but the idea of a blind Nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children.71

Finnis’s failure to distinguish between natural and unnatural inclinations makes his view of nature hard to distinguish from those of Hume, Mill, and their successors. Kai Nielsen, echoing Mill, questions the traditional natural law notions that the moral content of the law is “supposed

69 For Finnis’s doctrine of basic goods, see ibid., 59-99.
70 The phrase “natural law without nature” is from Pamela Hall, Narrative and the Natural Law: An Interpretation of Thomistic Ethics (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 16. For additional criticism of Finnis, see, e.g., Russell Hittinger, Critique of the New Natural Law Theory; and Jean Porter, Natural and Divine Law: Reclaiming the Tradition for Christian Ethics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). According to Porter, there is a fundamental difference between Finnis-Grisez and scholastics: Finnis and Grisez “share in the modern view that nature, understood in terms of whatever is pre- or non-rational, stands in contrast to reason. This is implied by their insistence that moral norms must be derived from reason alone; that is, from pure rational intuitions that are in no way dependent on empirical or metaphysical claims about the world. They insist on this point because they are persuaded by Hume’s argument that moral claims cannot be derived from factual premises but, as a result, they are forced to deny the moral relevance of all those aspects of our humanity that we share with other animals. . . . No scholastic would interpret reason in such a way as to drive a wedge between the pre-rational aspects of our nature and rationality. . . . [T]hey always presuppose an essential continuity between what is natural and what is rational, since on their view nature is itself an intelligible expression of divine reason.” Ibid., 93.
to come somehow from the very feelings and inclinations of all men.” 72 The problem, he argues, is that there is no basis for distinguishing from “perverted,” “primitive,” or “corrupt” inclinations. 73 Similarly, Finnis, while claiming that “knowledge through inclination” is not St. Thomas’s doctrine, criticizes the neo-scholastic view of natural law, which “presents the human person as a sort of puppet pulled hither and thither by inclinations which reason and rationally shaped choice merely serve, as means serve ends.” 74

b. “Psychological” 75 School: Stephen Brock

In contrast to the pre-rationalist account of the natural inclinations, Brock adopts a startling alternative: man’s natural inclinations do not precede reason’s grasp of the good, but rather follow from human cognition of goods. Brock sets out to confirm and develop a position he attributes to Lawrence Dewan. Following his reading of Dewan, Brock’s basic thesis . . . is that not only the apprehension that Thomas is talking about . . . but also the inclination, is rational. Reason’s natural understanding of human goods does not follow the natural inclinations to them. The inclinations follow the understanding. 76

A critical element of Brock’s claim is that the natural inclinations, insofar as they are human, are inclinations of the “rational appetite.” Brock does not deny that there are pre-rational natural inclinations, but he claims that these pre-rational inclinations are not the inclinations of man

73 Ibid.: “It is very difficult to see how this [i.e., Aquinas’s] doctrine differs very much from that of Russell (in his Human Society in Ethics and Politics) and Hume where they claim that reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions and that the fundamental data for and basis of ethics are the emotions, passions and impulses.” For discussion of Nielsen’s argument, see David J. Klassen, “Thomas Aquinas and Knowledge of the First Principles of the Natural Law” (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2007), 69-71.
75 On the use of the term “psychological,” see “A Note on the Distinction Between ‘Ontological’ and ‘Psychological’” below.
76 Stephen Brock, “Natural Inclination,” 60.
The natural inclinations are, then, not something that man’s reason understands, but rather they are the result of man’s understanding. This seemingly subtle distinction is critical to a correct understanding of q. 94, a. 2, as will be discussed at length (in reference to Brock’s position) in Chapters VI and VII.

c. “Natural teleology” school: Denis Bradley, et al.

The foregoing two views of human natural inclination in q. 94, a. 2 constitute opposite extremes. Nature is either the irrational, amoral, “blind Nature” of the Scottish Enlightenment, which must be ordered and kept in check by reason (“drives and urges school”), or nature is, instead, the acts of reason itself (“psychological school”). Neither of these positions fits the textual evidence, as I shall argue. A third position, I shall also argue, more accurately represents the texts of St. Thomas himself regarding, among other things, nature in general, human nature, rational appetite, and inclination.

This position accepts the text of q. 94, a. 2 at face value. It accepts that “all those things to which man has a natural inclination, reason naturally apprehends as goods,” and that man has three levels of natural inclination according to the nature he has in common with all substances and all animals, as well as the nature proper to man. As I explain in Chapters I, VI, and VII, nature, in this view, is prior to any psychological acts, that is, to any acts of cognition or acts of desire elicited by cognition. For nature to be able to act for an end, however, there must be some cognition by some intellect. This cognition, which is prerequisite to any supervient acts of cognition by the human intellect, is God’s.

Very few scholars in the contemporary literature address this point in any detail. Denis Bradley is one of these few to address the issue of the divine cognition upon which the teleology

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77 The example he gives is the “natural tendency for our brain synapses to fire.” Ibid., 61.
of all natural inclination, including human natural inclination, depends. Bradley focuses on the natural inclination of the will. The will, he writes, has)

an inherent finality. Aquinas attributes the necessity of apprehending things as good (and thus necessarily desiring them) to the natural appetite of the will. . . . Indeed, the natural teleology of the will may be called a ‘directive’ or teleological principle of the intellectual acts that generate Natural Law prescriptions. The natural inclination of the will, instilled by the Auctor naturae, antecedes practical reason’s apprehension of basic goods. The intellectual acts that spontaneously grasp the basic good follow the natural inclination of the will.78

Thus, for Bradley, the will’s natural inclination to certain ends is “prior to any intellectual grasp of those ends.”79

D. A Preliminary Comment on the “Literal” and “Figurative” Senses of Words

Because the philosophical meaning of ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 rests in large measure on the meaning of the term inclinatio naturalis, a large portion of this study is devoted to the meanings of the terms inclinatio, inclinare, natura, and naturalis. In consulting numerous dictionaries, lexicons, and glossaries of several languages, I have noticed that many of these works follow, in some variant, the lexicographical convention of dividing words into two senses: (1) “literal,” and (2) “figurative” (or, equivalently, “tropological”).80 Although I have not undertaken a study of

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80 This is true of English dictionaries, as well as Latin dictionaries written in English, French, and German. See, e.g., American Heritage Dictionary, 3rd ed. (New York: Dell Publishing, 1994); Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Inc., 2002); OED; Lewis & Short (“lit.” and “fig.”); Albert Blaise, Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954-1967) (“Blaise Patristic”) (“lit.” and “fig.”); Hermann Heumann and Emil Seckel, eds., Handlexicon zu den Quellen des römischen Rechts, 9th ed. (Jena: Fischer, 1891) (“tropisch”); Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer, Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie (Basel: Schwabe & Co. AG, 1971-2007) (“tropisch”). The major Latin-English lexicon of St. Thomas’s works, that of Roy Deferrari, employs the same distinction in some cases, but not consistently. For example, Deferrari defines naufragium as “(1) lit., a shipwreck, (2) fig., . . . ruin, loss, destruction.” For other words, he uses the distinction between the proper and improper senses of a word (see ibid., s.v. “motus”), or refers to the “transferred” sense (ibid., s.v. “novus”). Ludwig Schütz, Thomas-Lexikon usually uses the scholastic distinction between eigentlich “proper” and uneigentlich (“improper”) senses. See, e.g., Schütz, s.v.
the origins and meaning of this dichotomy of senses in modern lexicography, I have concluded that, in the case of natur- and inclin-terms, this literal-figurative duality reflects and, as it were, “enforces” a certain philosophical prejudice; it also epitomizes the difficulties involved in interpreting St. Thomas’s Latin through the lens of modern words, particularly English words.

What do “literal” and “figurative” mean? First, the *Oxford English Dictionary* ("OED"), which uses the literal-vs.-figurative convention, defines “literal” as pertaining to “the primary, original, or etymological sense of a word . . . as distinguished from any extended sense, metaphorical meaning, or underlying significance.” But this is not what St. Thomas means by “literal.” In St. Thomas’s usage, *litteralis* means according to the letter, that is, “word for word.” It refers to the sense of text (i.e., written words), not an individual word. It means, in turn, what the author of the text intends, which, confusingly enough for the lexicographer, sometimes includes the figurative sense of the same text. The modern sense of “literal,” as it applies to a word, seems to correspond to what St. Thomas calls the meaning of a word in its “proper sense” (*ratio propria*). The proper sense is the sense that was “first imposed” (*primus impositus*). In St. Thomas’s etymology of *natura*, he says the term “was first imposed to signify the generation of a motus.” A notable exception is the earlier (eighteenth century) Forcellini lexicon, Aegidio Forcellini, *Lexicon totius latinitatis* (Patavii: Typis Seminarii, 1940), which distinguishes between *proprie* and *translate*, which, as explained below, is St. Thomas’s distinction.

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81 *OED*, s.v. “literal.” In the case of a text (as opposed to a single word), “literal” means “the exact sense expressed by the actual wording of a phrase or passage, as distinguished from any extended sense, metaphorical meaning, or underlying significance.” Ibid.

82 In classical Latin, *litteralis* “literally” means “having to do with letters.” Lewis & Short, s.v. “litteralis.”

83 See, e.g., *ST* I, q. 10, a. 1 [Leon. 4.25] (“sensus litteralis est, quem auctor intendit”); *ST* I, q. 1, a. 10, ad 3 [Leon. 4.26] (“sensus parablicus sub litterali continetur, nam per voces significatur aliquid proprium, et aliquid figurative; nec est litteralis sensus ipsa figura, sed id quod est figuratum”); *Quodlibet VII*, q. 6, a. 1, ad 5 [Leon. 25/1.29:120-21]: “non est imposibile simul plura intelligere, in quantum unum est figura alterius.” See M. F. Johnson, “Another Look at St. Thomas and the Plurality of the Literal Sense of Scripture,” in *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 2 (1992): 119: “the literal sense of Scripture is what the author of Scripture intends to be understood by the words that are written.” Cf. *ST* I, q. 10, a. 1 [Leon. 4.25]: “illa . . . prima significatio, qua voces significatae per voces, iterum res alias significat, dicitur sensus spiritualis; qui super litteralem fundatur, et eum supponit.”
living thing” and, for this reason, it may mean the nativitas, “birth” of a thing.\footnote{ST I, q. 29, a. 1, ad 4 [Leon. 4.328]; “secundum philosophum, in V Metaphys., nomen naturae primo impositum est ad significandam generationem viventium, quae dicitur nativitas.” The term is understood to be derived from the verb for to be born or to “spring forth” (nascor, nascere, nasci, natus sum). See ST III, q. 2, a. 1 [Leon. 11.22] (“Sciendum est igitur quod nomen naturae a nascendo est dictum vel sumptum. Unde primo est impositum hoc nomen ad significandum generationem viventium, quae nativitas vel pullulatio [bringing forth young] dicitur, ut dicatur natura quasi nasciturae”); and In V Meta., lect. 5, n. 808 [Marietti 265-66]. Nascitura is the future active participle of nascor, “about to be born.”} St. Thomas also uses the expression primo impositum with respect to the original meanings of the terms “vision” (visus) (first meaning the act of the visual power); “power” (potentia) (first meaning the power of a man), and “light” (lumen) (first meaning corporeal light), among others.\footnote{ST I, q. 115 a. 2 (natura).} In English, a simple example of a word that, at first, has only a “literal” (i.e., corporeal sense) is “fire,” which first means the physical phenomenon of oxidation, seen as flames, but then takes on several figurative meanings, e.g. “to apply fire to,” as to a kiln; “discharge,” as in the firing of a gun or an employee; or “ambition,” as in “fire [in the belly].”

What then does “figurative” mean? As noted above, the OED defines the word “figurative” as “metaphorical, not literal.” Metaphor, in turn, is defined as a “figure of speech in which a name or descriptive word or phrase is transferred to an object or action different from, but analogous to, that to which it is literally applicable; a metaphorical expression.”\footnote{OED, s.v. “metaphor.”} No distinction is made between metaphor and analogy or the various other words that signify similarity (simile, allegory, etc.).

“Figurative,” in this wide sense, encompasses a number of terms in St. Thomas’s lexicon: \textit{figuralis, translativus, transumptivus, and metaphoricus}. Although, as noted, \textit{litteralis} can have a
wider meaning (including whatever the author meant), St. Thomas sometimes contrasts the *sensus figuralis* of a text with its *sensus litteralis* sense in a manner that anticipates modern usage.⁸⁷ *Figuralis*, in this use, means “symbolic” or “typical.”⁸⁸ In this way, many things spoken of in a literal sense in the Old Testament pre-figure the New Testament. For example, animal sacrifice, involving the “lITERAL” sacrifice of animals at that time, pre-figures the Eucharistic sacrifice.⁹⁹ Importantly, in these cases, the text means *both* the physical sacrifice *and* the thing it pre-figures *at the same time*. These are not cases of a word being used in a “figurative” (i.e., metaphorical) sense as the modern lexicographers use the term. To find the terms in St. Thomas’s lexicon that correspond to the English word “figurative,” we must turn to *translativus*, *transumptivus*, and *metaphoricus*.⁹⁰ Deferrari defines these terms as synonyms of each other.⁹¹ The participle *extensum* (“extended”) is used in a similar way.⁹² St. Thomas frequently contrasts the original sense (*sensus primus impositus*) of a word with its extended sense. The word is “carried over” (*transumptivus*) to mean something other than its original meaning. It is used *metaphorice*.

There is nothing sinister about the distinction between the meaning first imposed and the extended meaning. The “twisting away” (*detorqueantur*) of words from their original signification “so as to mean something else” is not a process of decline or corruption; it is, rather,

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⁸⁷ See, e.g., *ST* I-II, q. 102, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 7.229]: “multae particulares determinationes in caeremoniis veteris legis non habent aliquam causam litteralem, sed solam figuralem; in communi vero habent etiam causam litteralem.”

⁸⁸ See Deferrari, s.v. “figuralis.”

⁹⁹ See, e.g., *ST* I-II, q. 102, a. 3 [Leon. 7.230].

⁹⁰ See, e.g., *ST* III, q. 2, a. 1 [Leon. 11.22]: “deinde translatum est nomen naturae ad significandum principium activum illius generationis: quia virtutes agentes ex actibus nominari consueverunt.”

⁹¹ See, e.g., Deferrari, s.v. “translativus,” “of or belonging to transference, that is to be transferred, translative, metaphorical, syn of *metaphoricus* and *transumptivus*.”

⁹² *ST* I, q. 29, a. 1, ad 4 [Leon. 4.328]: “quia huismodi generatio est a principio intrinseco, extensum est hoc nomen ad significandum principium intrinsecum cuiuscumque motus. Et sic definitur natura in II Physic.”
a refinement. If, today, we say that “the valley is smiling,” “it is raining cats and dogs,” or “Field Marshal Rommel is the Desert Fox (Wüstenfuchs),” the literal sense of “valley,” “cat,” “dog,” and “fox” is obvious, while the meanings of these words in each of these examples are “figurative.” These distinct senses are, in St. Thomas’s terms, the senses of the words taken proprie (i.e., the sensus primus impositus) and metaphorice, respectively.

The trouble starts when the dichotomy between literal and figurative is imposed on the language we use to talk about nature and natural events. English speakers, despite our high regard for metaphor as a literary device, tend to see metaphor as something less than real, that is, non-“factual.” To say “there is more than one way to skin the cat” is “just a metaphor” in the sense that we do not really skin the cat; instead, we mean there is more than one way to accomplish a task, whatever the task may be. For St. Thomas, the extension of a term from its proper meaning to its “improper” (improprius) meaning does not make the extended meaning false, incorrect, or less real. To say the word is used in its improper sense simply means that, in the given context, it no longer means what it once meant; instead it truly and really means something else. Natura, in a philosophical context, does not mean birth; it now means, variously, the essence of a thing, a principle of motion (whether material or formal), a substance, etc.

For St. Thomas, in some cases, especially in the interpretation of Scripture, the use of metaphor involves a clear distinction between the ratio propria and the thing signified by the metaphor. Indeed, in some cases, the litteralis sense of a word in Scripture is not the proper sense of the word. For example, he explains that, when Scripture

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93 ST II-II, q. 57, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 9.4]. See note 2 above.
94 See, e.g., ST III, q. 2, a. 12 [Leon. 11.51]: “secundum philosophum, in V Metaphys. natura uno modo dicitur ipsa nativitas, alio modo essentia rei. Unde naturale potest aliquid dici dupliciter. Uno modo, quod est tantum ex principiis essentialibus rei, sicut igni naturale est sursum ferri.”
speaks of “God’s arm,” the literal sense is not that God has such a member, but only what is signified by this member, namely operative power. Hence it is plain that nothing false can ever underlie the literal sense of Holy Writ.95

Here, the reality signified by the metaphor takes precedence over the original meaning of the word and, according to this broad understanding of litteralis, the author means what he says.96

But in other cases, the disjunction between the proper sense and the metaphorical sense is more subtle. Consider St. Thomas’s discussion of the term motus in his commentary on the De anima. He says that motus is found in the operations of the soul in three ways: in the proper sense, in a less proper sense, and in a least proper sense.97 In the operations of the vegetative soul and sensuous desire, there is movement in the proper sense of both local motion (of blood from the heart, etc.) and qualitative alteration.98 But in the operations of the sensitive soul, such as sight, there is said to be motion properly only inasmuch as the organ of sight is corporeal, but less properly in that the act of seeing is spiritual. Motion in the proper sense means, St. Thomas says, secundum esse naturae not secundum esse spirituale.99 In the case of the operation of the intellect, “[l]east properly of all, indeed only metaphorically, is movement found in understanding, for in the intellect’s operation there is no change according to natural being.”100

To get to the point of this excursus on the proper and the improper senses of words, consider St. Thomas’s statement, “The stone strives to be downward [i.e., to be on the ground]”

95 ST I, q. 1, a. 10, ad 3 [Leon. 4.26]: “Non enim cum Scriptura nominat Dei brachium, est litteralis sensus quod in Deo sit membrum huiusmodi corporale, sed id quod per hoc membrum significatur, scilicet virtus operativa. In quo patet quod sensui litterali sacrae Scripturae nunquam potest subesse falsum.”
96 By “broad understanding” here I mean broader than the modern identification of “literal” with the original, physical meaning of a word, to the exclusion of all extended (“figurative”) meanings.
97 In I De anima, lect. 10, n. 12 [Leon. 45/1.50:169-74]: “motus attribuuntur operationibus animae, a diversis diversimode. Nam tripliciter invenitur motus in operationibus animae. In quibusdam enim invenitur motus proprie, in quibusdam minus proprie, in quibusdam vero minime proprie.”
98 In I De anima, lect. 10, n. 13 [Leon. 45/1.50:174-81].
99 In I De anima, lect. 10, n. 14 [Leon. 45/1.50:191-92].
100 In I De anima, lect. 10, n. 15 [Leon. 45/1.50:201-4]: “Minimum autem de proprietate motus, et nihil nisi metaphorice, invenitur in intellectu. Nam in operatione intellectus non est mutatio secundum esse naturae . . . .”
What “on earth,” as it were, could St. Thomas possibly mean by this statement? For the moderns, this sort of talk is either sheer nonsense or even something sinister: pantheism, a reenchantment of the world. Otherwise, the statement that the stone is “striving” toward anything is a metaphor of a particularly dreaded and reviled variety: anthropomorphism of the rankest sort. The statement (particularly the word “strives”) suggests, contrary to everything we have been taught in science classes, that the stone knows what it wants and acts on purpose.

Nevertheless, St. Thomas means what he says: the stone strives (appetit) to be on the ground. The stone does so by its “natural appetite” (appetitus naturalis). St. Thomas does not mean that the stone itself has cognition or chooses to seek the ground. The stone’s end is not univocally the same as a man’s purpose. But is the attribution of appetitus to nature a metaphor, as motus is attributed to the intellect metaphorically? The noun appetitus is derived from the verb appetere which, in classical Latin, means, in the “literal” senses given by Lewis & Short, “to strive after,” “to grasp after” (e.g., one’s hand), “to approach” (e.g., a city), or “to attack” (in a military sense). “Figuratively,” it means “to desire eagerly” (e.g., money). Is the philosophical use of appetitus in St. Thomas’s scholastic Latin “figurative,” or in St. Thomas’s terms, improper, transferred, or metaphorical? If motus as applied to the intellect is said only metaphorice as noted above, then surely “grasping for the ground” is said only figuratively of the stone.

101 SCG II, cap. 47, n. 2 [Leon. 13.377]. I translate appetit by “strives toward” because “appetite” is not a verb in English. Cf. Lewis & Short, s.v. “appetere”: “to strive after.”
Surprisingly, then, in hundreds of cases of the term *appetitus naturalis, natura appetit,* and similar combinations of *natur-* and *appet-* , St. Thomas nowhere says that *appetitus* or *appetere* is said of natural things metaphorically, improperly, or in any extended sense. On the contrary, in the very texts in which one might expect him to say that *appetitus naturalis* is a metaphor, he says, in effect, the opposite. In a discussion of the passions of the soul, he turns the physical-figurative dichotomy on its head. Instead of imposing the image of a human passion on dumb nature, he shows that the passions are the human analogue to natural appetite:

The effects of the soul’s passions are sometimes named metaphorically [metaphorice], from a likeness [similitudo] to sensible bodies: for the reason that the movements of the animal appetite are like the inclinations of the natural appetite. And in this way fervor is ascribed to love, expansion to pleasure, and depression to sorrow. For a man is said to be depressed, through being hindered in his own movement by some weight. \(^{103}\)

The same is true of the word *intentio*, which, in its “literal,” classical sense, means “a stretching out, straining, tension.” \(^{104}\) According to Deferrari, the word *intensio* (spelled with an “s”) has the same meaning, while *intentio* has only a range of philosophical meanings pertaining to “intentions,” that is, of the will or the mind. *Intentio*, though it is usually attributed to the rational

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\(^{103}\) *ST* I-II, q. 37, a. 2 [Leon. 6.254]: “effectus passionum animae quandoque metaphorice nominantur, secundum similitudinem sensibilium corporum, eo quod motus appetitus animalis sunt similes inclinationibus appetitus naturalis. Et per hunc modum fervor attribuitur amori, dilatatio delectationi, et aggravatio tristitiae. Dicitur enim homo aggraviari, ex eo quod aliquo pondere impeditur a proprio motu.” Also, although the names of the passions of the sensitive appetites are “transferred” to the operations of the rational appetite, the word appetite seems to be predicated univocally of both. See *In III Sent.*, d. 26, q. 1, a. 5 [Moos 3.829]: “Et ideo etiam imponitur nomen intellectivae operationi, per quod discernitur a sensitiva, sicut intelligere et scire, et hujusmodi. Similiter nomina operationum appetitivae sensibilis partis transferuntur in operationes appetitivae intellectivae partis; tamen in sensitiva parte sunt per modum materialis passionis, in parte autem intellectiva per modum simplicis actus non materialit; et ideo etiam aliqua nomina imponuntur appetitui intellectivo, quae ipsum distinguent ab alii, sicut velle, eligere, et hujusmodi. Sic ergo speis in parte sensitiva nominat quandam passionem materialem, sed in parte intellectiva simplicem operationem voluntatis immaterialiter tendentis in aliquod arduum.”

\(^{104}\) Lewis & Short, s.v. “intentio.”
powers, can also be attributed to nature.\(^{105}\) Again, St. Thomas nowhere says that *intentio* is used metaphorically or in an improper sense.\(^{106}\)

In general, philosophical terms of art in scholastic Latin are not regarded by St. Thomas as metaphors. According to Marie-Dominique Chenu, scholastic Latin is characterized by “repugnance to metaphorical language and, in general, to figures of thought and of speech, since these retain no consistency whatsoever when subjected to the most elementary abstraction.”\(^{107}\) In Chenu’s estimation, St. Thomas looks askance at the use of figurative language in philosophy. For example, he ridicules Plato’s method of teaching because “he constantly uses figures of speech, teaching by symbols and giving his words a meaning quite other than their literal sense, as when he calls the soul a circle.”\(^{108}\)

On the other hand, according to Armand Maurer, St. Thomas “often uses terms in primary and secondary senses in order to express the nuances of his thought.”\(^{109}\) For example, as we saw, he uses the term *motus* in a range of senses. As we have seen, *motus*, attributed to an operation of the intellect, is said only *metaphorice*. What is the difference, then, between a metaphorical and a non-metaphorical predication of a philosophical term? Why is *motus* a metaphor with respect to the operation of the intellect, whereas *appetitus* (whether applied to

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\(^{105}\) *De princ. nat.*, cap. 3 [Leon. 43.42:38-41], “possibile est agens naturale sine deliberatione intendere finem: et hoc intendere nihil aliud erat quam habere naturalem inclinationem ad aliquid.” See Chapter VII for further discussion of *inclinatio naturalis* as *intentio*.

\(^{106}\) In one text, St. Thomas seems to recognize the etymological link of *intentio* with *tendere*, but only to say that *intentio* is called “the eye” metaphorically. Here, “intention is an eye” is the metaphor, not the other way around. *ST* I-II, q. 12, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 6.94]: “*intentio nominatur oculus metaphorice, non quia ad cognitionem pertineat; sed quia cognitionem praesupponit, per quam proponitur voluntati finis ad quem movet; sicut oculo praevidimus quo tendere corporaliter debeamus.*”


\(^{108}\) *In I De an.*, lect. 8, n. 1 [Leon. 45/1.38:7-10]: “Omnia enim figurate dicit, et per symbola docet: intendens aliud per verba, quam sonent ipsa verba; sicut quod dixit animam esse circulum.”

stones or the will or anything in between) and *intentio* (applied either to the mind or to nature) are not metaphors?

A clarification of the meaning of “metaphor” in St. Thomas’s philosophy is in order. Because metaphor is, for St. Thomas, a type of analogy, a brief summary of his doctrine of analogy will help clarify what metaphor is and what it is not. There is no “treatise on analogy” in his works. Rather than producing my own study of St. Thomas’s texts on analogy, then, I shall rely chiefly on the works of several notable Thomists for general features of the doctrine and then turn to a consideration of certain texts in the corpus that are especially relevant to my purposes. Analogy in general is distinct from univocity. In the case of univocal predication, according to Joseph Owens, “[O]ne notion, the generic, makes the instances logically the same. Another notion, the specific differentia, make them logically different.”110 For example, “animal” is predicated univocally of both walrus and man. In the case of analogy, by contrast, “the one and the same feature renders the instances both alike and different.”111 There are many types of analogy for St. Thomas. The traditional example of “healthy” as predicated of medicine and urine is an example of the analogy of proportion, which does not directly concern us.112

111 Ibid.
112 John Wippel describes the distinction between analogy of proportion (or “analogy by agreement of proportion”) and analogy of proportionality as follows: “Agreement in terms of proportion may be of two types and, corresponding to this, analogical community may also be twofold. One kind of argument obtains between those things which are so proportioned to one another that they have a determined distance or other relationship to one another. For instance, the number two is so related to the unit as to serve as its double. Another kind of agreement obtains between two things which do not have a determined relationship to one another and is rather based on the agreement or similarity of two proportions with another. Thus the number six agrees with the number four because, just as six is the double of three, so is four the double of two. St. Thomas describes the first kind as an agreement of proportion, and the second type as an agreement of proportionality. . . . Something is said analogically of two things in the first way (by agreement of proportion) when one of these things bears a relationship to the other. Thus being is predicated of substance and of accident because of the relationship accident has to substance. So too, health is said of urine and of an animal because urine bears some relationship to the health of the animal (by serving as a sign of
Rather, the type of analogy at issue is the “analogy of proper proportionality,” in which “the analogous notion is found in its proper sense in all the analogates.” To use Owens’s example, a point and a surface can both be called an “extremity,” but the difference between the two is manifest when the qualifiers “of a line” or “of a solid” are added, respectively. Similar, John Wippel gives the example of the word “sight,” which “is said of corporeal vision and of understanding: just as sight is to the eye, so is understanding to the mind.” In neither example is there a “genus” (of “extremity” or of “sight”) which is differentiated by species, as would be the case in univocal predication.

Also distinct from the analogy of proper proportionality is the “analogy of improper proportionality,” which is called “metaphor.” According to James Anderson, “things can receive a metaphorical predication not because they share integrally and properly a perfection or form which is common to them proportionately, but only because there is some . . . likeness consisting in the production of similar effects.” In other words, as Charles Hart writes, “[i]n metaphorical proportionality . . . the relation involved is in only one of the analogates.” There is a similarity between the analogates, but it is only “an imagined similarity.” In Hart’s example, “smiling” is predicated properly of a human face, but metaphorically of a valley.

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113 Ibid.
114 Ibid.
115 Anderson, Bond of Being (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1954), 172, citing De malo, q. 16, a. 1, ad 3; De ver. q. 2, a. 1.
116 Hart, Thomistic Metaphysics, 37.
117 Ibid., 36. The similarity is “imagined” in that, if we say, “the man is a lion” the nature of lion is not actually in the man, but is imagined to be in the man. A certain leonine courage is in the man, and this courage (being like that of a lion) is the real basis of the metaphor.
118 Ibid. 37.
Another example is in the relationship, “intellect : soul :: eye : body.” As Hart explains, “[t]he eye is intrinsic only in the body, but extrinsic in relation to the soul.”\textsuperscript{119} In terms of the distinction explained above between the proper sense and the improper sense of a word, as Ralph McInerny writes, “A name is used metaphorically when that to which it is transferred does not fall under the \textit{ratio propria} of the name.”\textsuperscript{120} In terms of nature, Anderson writes, metaphorical analogy “consists in the similarity in activity or mode of operation of two or more agents which are diverse in nature; so that the analogated character or form is actually present in each of the analogates: in one of them properly and formally, in the other or others only virtually . . .”\textsuperscript{121} For example, to say that Rommel is the “Desert Fox” is to predicate “fox” metaphorically of Rommel, because the nature of “fox” is not in Rommel.\textsuperscript{122} “Fox” is a univocal concept in itself, “which is merely used by the intellect in an analogical manner.”\textsuperscript{123} In the order of human knowledge, as Anderson explains, the “common term (the analogon) is formally present in only one analogate and only contingently and improperly present in the other analogates; knowledge of the proper analogate is prior to the knowledge of the improper; one must understand human smiling first.”\textsuperscript{124} In terms of causality, “the nature of a fox or of a lion is not found intrinsically in a man; what is common is only a likeness in the dynamic domain, that of effects produced or actions done: the accurately called \textit{order of efficient causality.”}\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 36-37.
\textsuperscript{120} McInerny, \textit{Logic of Analogy}, 146-7.
\textsuperscript{121} Anderson, \textit{Bond of Being}, 177.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 179.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 181.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 176.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 179.
On this Thomistic understanding of metaphor, the case of intellectual *motus* can be explained as follows. St. Thomas accepts Aristotle’s doctrine of motion as a term of the philosophy of nature. It *means* the act of something that is still in potency insofar as it has become actualized. The common term, motion, which is to say partially actualized potency, is only found in local motion or qualitative alteration. This common notion is not found in the act of the intellect, by contrast, because an intellectual operation is already in a state of complete actuality.\(^{126}\) The effect of motion in the order of efficient causality is found in the act of the intellect, but not the motion itself.

What then, are we to make of words like *appetere* and *intendere* and their nominal counterparts *appetitus* and *intentio*? Are these terms, as extended in meaning from the literal, classical senses of “attack” and “stretch,” respectively, predicated only metaphorically? In my view, these terms, as they are used in St. Thomas’s lexicon, are *not* metaphors. This point requires explanation.

According to Chenu, in scholastic Latin, the use of an image in speech is sometimes “carried to the point at which [the] image finally becomes entirely conceptualized, with the result that, henceforth in philosophic parlance, the word itself refers directly to that which was compared to it.”\(^{127}\) In the case of the word *lumen*, for example, the “word no longer implies a metaphor; *de plano*, it designates the mind.”\(^{128}\) Thus St. Thomas distinguishes between the original meaning (*primus impositus*), metaphorical meaning, and the “extended” (*extensus*)

\(^{126}\) *In I De an.*, lect. 6, n. 82 [Leon. 45/1.30:219-25].


\(^{128}\) Ibid.
meaning of the terms “sight” (visio) and “light” (lux).

In several texts, St. Thomas considers the question of whether light (lux) can be found in spiritual creatures. According to McInerny, the problem St. Thomas faces is this:

As said of spiritual things, [light] cannot properly suppose for them; it is a metaphor based on similar effects—just as God is called Sun. How then can Augustine be right? His view recognizes that the first and most proper meaning of ‘light’ (its ratio propria) involves matter, for it refers to the external sense.

The solution to this problem is St. Thomas’s distinction between two senses in which a name can be understood:

in one way, according to its first imposition; in another way, according to the use of the name [secundum usum nominis]. As is clear in the name of vision, what was first imposed is the act of the sense of sight; but on account of the dignity and certitude of this sense, the name was extended according to the common usage of speech [usum loquentium] . . . to all intellectual cognition. And similarly it is said of the name of light. For indeed first it was established to signify that which accomplishes manifestation in the visual sense; but later its was extended to signify all that accomplishes manifestation according to whatever knowledge. If therefore the name of light is taken according to its first imposition, it is said to be in spiritual beings metaphorically . . . . If however it is taken according to what is in the use of common speech to extend to all manifestation, thus properly [proprie] it is said to be in spiritual creatures.

Thus, by an extension of meaning, the name “light” comes to signify, not corporeal light, but a certain common notion (ratio communis). The extended meaning, indeed, becomes another

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129 ST I, q. 67, a. 1 [Leon. 5.163].
131 McInerny, Logic of Analogy, 149.
132 ST I, q. 67, a. 1 [Leon. 5.163]: “uno modo, secundum primam eius impositionem; alio modo, secundum usum nominis. Sic ut patet in nomine visionis, quod primo impositum est ad significandum actum sensus visus; sed propter dignitatem et certitudinem eius sensus, extensum est hoc nomen, secundum usum loquentium, ad omnem cognitionem aliorum sensuum (dicimus enim, vide quomodo sapiet, vel quomodo redolet, vel quomodo est calidum); et ulterius etiam ad cognitionem intellectus, secundum illud Matth. V, beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt. Et similiter dicendum est de nomine lucis. Nam primo quidem est institutum ad significandum id quod facit manifestationem in sensu visus, postmodum autem extensum est ad significandum omne illud quod facit manifestationem secundum quamcumque cognitionem. Si ergo accipiatur nomen luminis secundum suam primam impositionem, metaphorice in spiritualibus dicitur, ut Ambrosius dicit. Si autem accipiatur secundum quod est in usu loquentium ad omnem manifestationem extensum, sic proprie in spiritualibus dicitur.”
proper meaning. As McInerny explains, the \textit{ratio propria} of light is a notion expressing something in the sensible realm, “that which makes bodies visible.” Accordingly,

only those things are signified by the term which save this \textit{ratio propria}. Used of anything else, it is used metaphorically and supposes improperly. However, if usage indicates that the meaning of the name has been extended, we can recognize a \textit{ratio communis} of the name. . . . If we consider the things which fall under the common signification of the term, the spiritual principle of manifestation, e.g. the agent intellect, is really or ontologically more perfect than the sun. . . . [A]ccording to the order of the imposition of the name, the sun is most properly signified by the term.\footnote{McInerny, \textit{Logic of Analogy}, 149.}

St. Thomas, as McInerny explains, is not abandoning the “proper” (i.e., original) sense of \textit{lux} entirely, but simply recognizing that usage now sanctions the extended meaning’s signification of a common notion.\footnote{Ibid.: “That is, it is still true that the ‘ratio propria nominis non invenitur nisi in uno tantum.’ [\textit{ST} I, q. 16, a. 6] As St. Thomas says, ‘Lux verius est in spiritualibus quam in corporalibus, non secundum propriam rationem lucis, sed secundum rationem manifestationis.’ [\textit{In II Sent.}, d. 13, q. 1, a. 2] This has nothing to do with intrinsic possession of the quality. Notice too that if we have in mind the proper notion of the name, spiritual things are not signified by the name and it is used only metaphorically of them; if we have in mind the common notion, they are signified by it, and \textit{secundum rem} that notion is verified most perfectly of them. [\textit{De ver.}, q. 1, a. 8].”}
The new meaning, philosophically speaking, is indeed \textit{more} proper than the original, “proper” meaning.

In Chenu’s terms, a metaphor made proper is a “conceptualized image.” Examples he gives of conceptualized images include \textit{reflexio}, \textit{continuatio}, \textit{reditio}, and \textit{circulatio}.\footnote{Chenu, \textit{Towards Understanding St. Thomas}, 172, n. 23.} “Since usage reveals their intended signification, this is a richer source for their being understood than their original meaning can be,” Chenu writes.\footnote{Ibid., 168.} In my view, \textit{appetitus} and \textit{intentio} conform to the same model. In both cases, the proper notion (attacking and stretching, respectively) have faded. By sanction of scholastic usage, these terms, in the minds of theologians and philosophers, now signify instead certain common notions. By “common” in the term “common notion” (\textit{ratio communis}), I mean something that is actually present in everything of which it is predicated according to the analogy of proper proportionality. The nature of “fox,” because it is only
imagined to be in Rommel (who is not really a fox), is not common to both Rommell and the fox. That which is common to both Rommel and the fox is only a certain craftiness or *sagacitas*. St. Thomas says that foxes have a “natural inclination . . . to hunt their victim craftily (*sagaciter*).”\(^\text{137}\)

In the case of *appetitus*, as will be discussed in Chapter VI, especially as it is used in the expression *appetitus naturalis*, the term signifies an order or relation towards what is fitting for the nature of which *appetitus* is predicated, prior to any actual grasping, approaching, or other motion. In its philosophical signification, *intentio* means, among other things, an intention of the will, “an act of the will in order to the *ratio* ordering those things which are to the end.”\(^\text{138}\) In a special sense, even inanimate natures are said to “intend” their natural ends.\(^\text{139}\) These *intentio*-terms properly signify “intentions.” The *ratio communis*—what Chenu calls the “vital unity” that ties together the original, proper sense and the new sense that has become proper by extended usage—is a certain “tending,” which need not be physical: “‘intention,’ as the name itself denotes [*sonat*], signifies ‘to tend’ towards something.”\(^\text{140}\)

Does *inclinatio* fit the same pattern of extension to the point at which it properly signifies some common notion in St. Thomas’s philosophy? As explained in Chapter I, *inclinatio* and *inclinare*, unlike *appetere* and *intentio*, still carry a strong echo of the classical and late Latin

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\(^\text{137}\) *ST* I, q. 63, a. 4, ad 3 [Leon. 5.129]: “naturaem inclinationem . . . vulpes ad quaerendum victum sagaciter.”

\(^\text{138}\) *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 13, ad 16 [Leon. 22/3.646:296-99]: “intentio est actus voluntatis in ordine ad rationem ordinantem ea, quae sunt ad finem.”

\(^\text{139}\) *De princ. nat.*, cap. 3 [Leon. 43.42:38-41], “possibile est agens naturale sine deliberatione intendere finem: et hoc intendere nihil aliud erat quam habere naturalem inclinationem ad alienum.” See Chapter VII for further discussion of *inclinatio naturalis* as *intentio*.

\(^\text{140}\) *ST* I-II, q. 12, a. 1 [Leon. 6.94]: “intentio, sicut ipsum nomen sonat, significat in aliquod tendere.” Chenu explains that St. Thomas “looks for the *propria ratio nominis* [proper definition of a name] with great care, but this does not mean that he condemns the use of a word in its other meanings, or even in the meanings that have been added to the word or which remain very general. On the contrary, he recognizes that a vital unity holds these meanings together.” Chenu, *Towards Understanding St. Thomas*, 119.
senses of “bending” and “bowing,” as the monk, out of respect, inclines his head in the presence of his abbot. Nevertheless, I shall argue that inclin-terms now signify a certain common notion.

F. A Preliminary Comment on the Distinction Between “Ontological” and “Psychological”

In Chapters II, VI, and VII, I employ a distinction between what I call “ontological” and “psychological.” I am using these modern, non-Thomistic words of Greek origin to express, in adjectival form, the distinction between, on one hand, things that pertain to, or follow upon, the nature of a thing directly (“ontological,” as in pertaining to the being) and, on the other hand, things that follow upon the operation of the cognitive powers of the souls of man and other animals, which is to say the sensitive and intellectual powers. These latter things are “psychological” inasmuch as they pertain to the operation of powers of soul. In other words, this distinction corresponds to St. Thomas’s distinction between first and second levels of actuality: “The first act is the form and integrity of a thing; the second act is its operation.”

This distinction also corresponds to St. Thomas’s distinction between two senses of “natural.” A thing can be natural because (1) it is accomplished entirely by nature alone; or, (2) nature inclines to it, although it cannot be achieved without acts of apprehension and appetite.

I apply this distinction to natural inclination in two ways. First, natural inclination is an inclination that is real and follows upon a real nature. It is not simply a mental image “projected”

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141 The *OED* defines “psychological” as, inter alia, “Of or relating to the mind or mental processes; mental; (also) relating to or affecting a person's emotional state.” In the sense in which I am using the term it includes these things, but extends to animal cognition as well. Although the acts of vegetative powers could also be considered “psychological” inasmuch as they are acts of the soul, I am only concerned with cognitive acts.

142 *ST* I, q. 48, a. 5 [Leon. 4.496]: “Actus quidem primus est forma et integritas rei, actus autem secundus est operatio.” On this distinction as it applies to human nature and the powers of the soul, see Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 156.

143 See *ST* I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273]. This distinction is discussed in depth in Chapter IV.
upon nature or, in other words, a “psychologist” event that really takes place only in the mind. Second, in discussions of appetite, I show that natural inclination is the inclination that follows upon natural form, prior to any act of sense or intellectual cognition by man, that is, prior to any “second act” of the cognitive powers of the human soul. In both these senses, natural inclination is “ontological,” not “psychological.” It seems to me that the words “ontological” and “psychological,” although potentially misleading if taken out of context, are more felicitous than “first-actualitative,” “second-actualitative,” or the like. I use the term “psychological” rather than “cognitive,” because, as I explain in Chapter VI, the cognition upon which the action of natural agents for an end is God’s cognition. The term “psychological” applies to human cognition (and that of other animals), but it does not apply to God, because God does not have a soul.

G. Prospectus of Chapters

Chapter I (“Inclinatio”) is a lexicographical and philosophical study of the terms inclinatio, inclinare, and inclinatio naturalis in St. Thomas’s usage. It distinguishes his usage of inclin-terms from prevalent senses of “inclination” and “incline” in modern English. It compares his inclin-terms with other terms that are sometimes used synonymously (e.g., appetitus). It also distinguishes natural inclinations from other types of inclination which, though not in themselves “unnatural” in every case, are not what St. Thomas means by “natural inclination” in the context of natural law.

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144 On psychologism as a form of reductionism, see Robert Sokolowski, Introduction to Phenomenology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 114: “Psychologism is the claim that things like logic, truth, verification, evidence, and reasoning are simply empirical activities of the psyche.” Thus, in a psychologistic view, attributing natural inclination to inanimate beings would be a psychic event, an empirical description of the mind at work, not a statement about the being of natural things.

145 See ST I, q. 3, a. 2 [Leon. 4.37].
Chapter II (“Inclinatio Naturalis and the Natural Law Tradition”) turns to a historical examination of the possible sources of St. Thomas’s NL-language in the natural law tradition, including Latin translations of the works of Aristotle and others, Roman and canon law sources, and works of medieval theology. It argues that the precise language and notion of *inclinatio naturalis* serve as the “linchpin” by which St. Thomas synthesizes divergent, but authoritative, definitions of natural law, particularly those of Gratian, Cicero, and Ulpian.

Chapter III (“Natura: Human Nature and Natural Inclination”) investigates the many meanings of *natura* in St. Thomas’s Latin and distinguishes between certain “proper” and “improper” senses with reference to natural law, describes the dangers of reading St. Thomas’s natural law texts in terms of certain senses of the English word “nature,” explores whether human nature is primarily animal or rational, or somehow both, and examines what St. Thomas means by the “order of the natural inclinations” in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

Chapter IV (“Naturalis and the Humanly Natural”) examines certain misleading senses of “natural” in modern English and distinguishes those senses from St. Thomas’s *naturalis*. It then investigates the “humanly natural” (my term), that is, what is natural for man as a rational being, which is not identifiable with things that flow automatically from the “principles of nature,” but instead means those things to which nature inclines but which must be mediated, perfected, or carried out through acts of apprehension and will. It then examines a central case of the humanly natural and its accompanying inclination: man’s natural inclination to virtue.

Chapter V (“Natural Inclination, Natural Evil, and Sinful Inclination”) establishes that, for St. Thomas, nature is good, and that natural inclination, in the sense proper to natural law, is only to the good; distinguishes between universal nature (the entire order of causality in the
universe) and particular nature (the nature of a specific kind of thing) to account for the naturalness of certain natural evils such as death and illness; examines the theological notions of original sin and fallen nature to show that modern philosophers sometimes mistake the very fallenness of nature for nature itself; analyzes certain problematic texts in which St. Thomas seems to say that there are natural inclinations to sin and vice, and distinguishes natural inclination in these contexts from natural inclination in the proper sense; and investigates reason’s governance of unruly human inclinations.

Chapter VI (“Appetitus”) examines how natural inclination is related to appetites and their objects. It distinguishes natural appetite, which St. Thomas frequently equates with natural inclination, from sensitive and rational appetites, which follow upon apprehension by sense perception or intellection. It then examines how the sensitive and rational appetites are nonetheless rooted in the natural inclinations of the apprehensive and appetitive powers of the soul.

Chapter VII (“Opus naturae opus intelligentiae”) addresses the theme of exteriority and natural inclination. It shows why the notion of an exterior aspect of natural inclination presents a philosophical problem; examines the notion of God as an “exterior principle” of human actions; distinguishes natural inclination from inclinations caused by violence or force; examines the notion of divine direction as “impression” in relation to natural inclination; distinguishes the teleology of nature from the purposes of merely human art and shows how nature can nevertheless be the divine art; investigates whether natural inclination is a motion, a disposition, or form itself; and investigates the “intentionality” of natural inclination in the context of divine cognition of the ends of nature.
The Appendix, “Index of Natural Inclinations According to St. Thomas Aquinas,” identifies and categorizes the many texts in which St. Thomas speaks of a thing having a “natural inclination” (inclinatio naturalis) to something (i.e., to an operation, end, or good). The texts are arranged according to the “grade” of the being that has the natural inclination and, within each grade, the thing toward which the being is inclined. I give special emphasis to human natural inclinations, e.g., of the will.
We begin our inquiry into St. Thomas’s theory of natural inclination with a lexicological and philosophical study of his use of the term *inclinatio* and *inclinare* (collectively “inclin-terms”) and, in turn, of the composite term *inclinatio naturalis* and equivalent combinations of *inclin- and natur-* (collectively “NI-terms”) throughout his works. By “lexicological” study, as opposed to merely lexicographical, I mean a study of St. Thomas’s inclination-“lexicon” as a propaedeutic to a philosophical understanding of *inclinatio naturalis*.¹ What does St. Thomas mean by “inclination” (*inclinatio*) and “incline” (*inclinare*), and how does he use these terms in conjunction with *natura*? How do St. Thomas’s senses of *inclinatio* and *inclinare* compare to modern English senses of “inclination” and “incline”? Does any other term in St. Thomas’s lexicon (e.g., *appetitus*) have exactly the same meaning as *inclinatio*? Does St. Thomas use the term *inclinatio* only to describe natural inclinations, or are there other kinds of inclinations?

I address these questions in five sections. Section A surveys, by means of dictionary entries and computer database searches, the use of *inclin*-terms in St. Thomas’s Latin,

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¹ Samuel Johnson defines a “lexicographer” as a “writer of dictionaries; a harmless drudge that busies himself in tracing the original, and detailing the signification of words.” Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London: W. Strahan, 1755), 1195. The lexicologist’s purpose is philosophical, not merely etymological or lexicographical. For the meaning of “lexicological,” see John Tomarchio, “Thomistic Axiomatics in an Age of Computers,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 16 (1999): 249: “The lexicologist treats an author’s writings as comprising a ‘lexicon’ proper to him, and systematically constructs morphological, syntactical, and statistical profiles of the words the author uses, as a propaedeutic to philosophical interpretation.” Tomarchio uses a lexicological method to study the proposition *Quod recipitur in aliquo est in eo per modum recipientis*. Although I do not presume to have mastered or reproduced Tomarchio’s procedure, I have attempted to use his method as a model for my research on the compound term *inclinatio naturalis* and the proposition *natura inclinat*. Any shortcomings of this attempt are entirely my own.
beginning with a brief survey of the meanings of inclin-terms in classical and Christian Latin and examining St. Thomas’s usage of NI-language in grammatical terms, focusing on the inclin-component of NI-terms. Using this lexicographical data as a starting point, section B draws three philosophical conclusions about St. Thomas’s NI-language: (i) the term inclinatio is used in a teleological sense, that is, the inclination is towards a determinate end; (ii) the teleological sense of inclin-terms carries both a grammatically “reflexive,” intrinsic note (the thing inclines towards its end) and a grammatically “transitive,” extrinsic note (an exterior agent or mover, exterior to the inclined thing, inclines the thing towards its end); and (iii) although St. Thomas uses NI-terms in various senses, the primary and proper sense for purposes of natural law is the inclination that follows upon natural form (not matter). Having established in a preliminary, lexicographical way the proper sense of inclinatio naturalis for St. Thomas, section C distinguishes this proper understanding of inclinatio naturalis from certain misleading (“dangerous”) senses of the term “natural inclination” in contemporary English. The last two parts turn back to St. Thomas’s own lexicon. Section D examines certain terms in St. Thomas’s lexicon whose meanings partly overlap with that of inclinatio naturalis (e.g., instinctus naturae). Section E distinguishes natural inclination from certain “supervenient,” but not necessarily unnatural, inclinations (e.g., inclinations of violence, passion, habit, and grace).

A. Lexicographical Investigation: Inclinatio and inclinare in St. Thomas’s Latin

By “St. Thomas’s Latin” I mean both, in general, the Latin language as he inherited it and, in particular, St. Thomas’s own distinctive usage.
1. Classical Latin

Both the noun *inclinatio* and the verb *inclinare* are common words in classical Latin. They are related to the Greek word *κλίνειν* (“to cause to lean”). In analogical terms, the *ratio propria* of all these terms is “to bend” or “to lean.” Related Latin terms include *clinare* (v., “to cause to lean”), *clinas* (part., “inclined,” “bent”), *clinamen* (n., “the inclination or turning aside of a thing”), and *declinatio* (“turning away from”). Although St. Thomas gives no etymology of *inclinatio* or *inclinare*, he may have been aware that the stem of these words, −*clin*, is related to the Greek term *κλίνη*, which, twice he comments, means bed or couch. These Latin and Greek terms, along with the English word “lean,” share a common root in the Sanskrit word *çri* (“to lean”).

Lewis & Short give a number senses of the Latin terms, grouped according to the lexicographers’ conventional division between “literal” and “tropological.”

a. Inclinare

This general definition of the verb *inclinare* comprises two distinct senses depending on whether the inclination of the thing comes from an exterior agent (transitive) or from

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3 Lewis & Short, s.vv. “clinare,” “clinas,” “clinamen,” and “declinatio.”

4 *Cat. in Ioann.*, cap. 2, l. 2: “Triclinium ordo trium lectorum; clini enim lectum significat.” *Lect. super Ioann.*, cap. 2, lect. 1. “dicitur triclinium a tripli ordine lectorum: cline enim in Graeco lectum significat.” By extension, *inclinatio* is also used in the geographical sense as a translation of the Greek κλίμα or ἐγκλίσις, meaning “the inclination or slope, especially of the earth from the equator to the pole.” Similarly, Vitruvius uses the expression *inclinatio caeli* as a translation of the Greek κλίμα or κλίματα: “propter inclinationes caeli, quae Graeci κλίματα dicunt,” Vitruv. 1.10 (quoted in Lewis & Short). According to the Forcellini *Lexicon*, *inclinatio* is a translation of ἐγκλίσις, “an inclining or bending downwards,” in either the grammatical or geographical senses.

5 *OED*, s.v. “lean.”

6 Lewis & Short, s.v. “inclinare,” “inclinatio.” As explained in the introduction, these terms are misleading. In any event, “literal” in the modern sense is much narrower than Thomas’s understanding of the “literal” senses of, for example, a scriptural text.
within (reflexive). In the transitive sense, it means “cause to lean, bend, incline, turn a thing in any direction; to bend down, bow a thing”—that is to say, one thing inclines another thing. The intransitive sense of *inclinare* is reflexive, “to bend down, turn, incline”—that is, the thing inclines itself. Similarly, in Roman legal usage, the term *inclinare* has the literal senses, either transitive and intransitive according to context, of “tend,” “turn,” or “to cut or bring down.” For instance, a legal liability may result when a person’s tree “inclines” onto a neighbor’s property.

In the tropological, transitive sense, *inclino, -are* means “to turn or incline a person or thing in any direction,” which is to say, for example, to change a person’s mind or entice an animal towards a course of action. In the tropological, intransitive sense, *inclinare* means “to incline to, be favorably disposed towards any thing.” The participle form *inclinatus* can mean “inclined, disposed, prone to any thing.” Figuratively, *inclinare* can have the sense of being disposed toward a certain opinion, a sense which appears in Roman law.

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7 Lewis & Short, s.v. “inclinare.”
8 Ibid.
11 Lewis & Short, s.v. “inclinare.”
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Heumann and Seckel, *Handlexicon*, s.v. “inclinare”: “tropisch: sich zu einer Ansicht neigen, z. B. incl. *in sententiam, in hoc, ut putet* . . . ; quaerbatur—et *inclinandum est.*” E.g., *Dig.* 15.1.7.2 (“Scire autem non utique singulas res debit . . . et in hanc sententiam Pomponius inclinat” “The master does not have to be aware of every specific item in the property . . . as [the jurist] Pomponius tends to think”); *Dig.* 30.81.3 (“Sed *inclinandum est testatorem etiam de solo cogitasse, sine quo aedificium stare non potest*” “But one must incline to the assumption that the testator meant to include the land without which the building cannot stand”).
b. Inclinatio

The noun *inclinatio*, *onis* (f.) is defined as “a leaning, bending, inclining to one side.”\(^{15}\) Common literal senses include the motion of a person bending his body or head in a particular direction.\(^{16}\) By extension, *inclinatio* in the figurative sense is defined as “an inclination, tendency” and, in particular, “inclination, bias, favor,” e.g. the *inclinatio animi* or *inclinatio voluntatis* towards some end, passion, or opinion.\(^{17}\)

Another set of classical Latin senses of inclin-terms, which arguably takes on a different significance in later Latin (as discussed below), is the figurative sense of *inclinare* to mean “deterioriating” or “sinking,” whether the thing itself is “declining” or “being brought down [by another]”: “to change, alter . . . for the worse, to bring down, abase, cause to decline,” and “to change for the worse . . . fail.”\(^{18}\) In a less pejorative sense, *inclinare* can mean “to yield” (e.g., to fear or eloquence) or, in a military usage, “to give way” or “to cause to give way.”\(^{19}\)

\(^{15}\) Lewis & Short, s.v. “inclinatio.”

\(^{16}\) E.g., Cic. *Nat. D*. 1.34.94 (“ingressus, cursus, accubitio, inclinatio, sessio”), quoted in Lewis & Short, s.v. “inclinatio.” Cicero is making the point that if, contrary to his view, the gods had bodies like men they would have to engage in the same motions of walking, running, bending, sitting, etc. According to Ritter, the literal sense of *inclinatio* is “zunächst rein körperlich-räumlich.” Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer, *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (Basel: Schwabe & Co. AG, 1971-2007), s.v. “Inklination.”

\(^{17}\) Lewis & Short, e.g., Seneca, *Clem*. 2.4: “Cruedelitas est inclinatio animi ad asperiora.” Accord, Forcellini, Lexicon, “Speciatim est in aliquem animi inclinatio, studium, benevolentia,” e.g., Cicero, *Orat*. 2.29.129: “Necesse est ut is, qui nobis causam adjudicaturus est, inclinacione voluntatis propendeat in nos.” Although Thomas does not ordinarily use NI-language in the sense of “favor,” in one case he uses *inclinatio* (without *natura*) to mean “persuasive power”: “magnam inclinationem, idest magnam vim persuasivam.” In II *De caelo*, lect. 1., n. 2 [Leon. 3.121]; Cf. Leonine Latin text of Aristotle, *De caelo*, II.1 [Leon. 3.118, text 1], “Si enim sic quidem habere contingit, secundum quem autem modum illi factum esse dicebatur non contingit, magnam utique habebit et hoc inclinationem ad fidem de immortalitate ipsius sempiternitate.”


\(^{19}\) Ibid. E.g. to yield: Cicero, *Att*. 3.13.2 (“inclinari timore”); Quintillian, 10.1.80 (“inclinasse eloquentiam”). In military usage, e.g., Tacitus, *Ann*. 1, 64 (“inclinantes jam legiones”); Livy, 1.12.3 (“ut Hostus cecidit, confestim Romana inclinatur acies,” i.e., loses ground, retreats).
2. Patristic Latin

Although I have not undertaken a comprehensive study of the patristic use of *inclin*-terms, my review of patristic glossaries and lexicons, as well as computer searches of texts in the *Patrologiae Latinus*, suggest that the Church Fathers continue to use *inclinare* and *inclinatio* in the same senses as those terms have in classical Latin—usually relating to bowing or bending, either literally (e.g., of the head) or figuratively (e.g., of the heart).\(^{20}\) For instance, Ambrose of Milan (330-97) uses the expression *inclinatio mentium*.\(^{21}\) For the Fathers, *inclinare*, as in classical Latin, also has the sense of “to turn toward or away from something” or, by extension, “to decide in favor of something.”\(^{22}\) Also, corresponding to the classical sense of *inclinare* as “decline” or “bring down,” there is a similar, although perhaps more pronounced, senses in patristic Latin: “decline,” “diminish,” “demean,” “destroy,” “submit,” “vanquish.”\(^{23}\)

At the same time, there is a notable appearance of a new sense that has no exact counterpart in classical Latin. Whereas in classical Latin, as noted, *inclinare* (but not

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\(^{21}\) *Sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis Episcopi de excido urbis hierosolymitanae libri quinqui*, lib. 5, cap. 33 (PL, vol. 15).

\(^{22}\) *Blaise Patristic*, s.v. “inclino”: “tourner, incliner à, décider à (cl.)”; passive, “être ému, fléchi”; reflexive, “se décider à; allegorical, “tourner: allegoriae sensus in exercitium moralitatis i.”; active, “détourner de.” Citations are omitted because, as Blaise notes, these are classical senses.

\(^{23}\) *Blaise Patristic*, s.v. “inclino”: “4. faire décliner, diminuer, rabaisser, ruinier, perdre (cl.)” e.g., Tertullian, *De test. an.*, 1 (“inclino fidem”); Gregory the Great, *Epistulae*, 1, 72 (“inclino fidem christiani nominis”); also, “soumettre, réduire, vaincre,” e.g., Cassiodorum, *Variae*, 2, 41, 1 (“populus inclinatus”). Although Blaise designates these senses as “classical,” the examples given suggest a distinctive note of Christian humility.
Inclinatio) can have the sense of “decline” (for the worse), “bring down,” “abase,” or “yield to,” in patristic Latin, both inclinatio and inclinare take on a distinct notion of humility, adapted to a theological setting. Inclinare, understood as “submit” and “vanquish” thus now have the additional senses of submitting to God or to a religious superior and being vanquished, that is, by God or the Faith. 24 Alexander Souter’s Glossary of Later Latin includes only those words or senses of words that “do not occur in the period before A.D. 180” and yet have become common words between A.D. 180 and A.D. 600. 25 Notably then, Souter’s definitions for five common inclin- words are all characteristic only of Later—which is to say, in these instances, patristic—Latin: e.g., inclinatio, “humiliation, humility”; inclinatus, “gentle, kindly”; inclinis, “humble”; and inclino, “(in the Christian sense) to humble.” 26 According to Blaise Patristic, inclinatio is also used to mean “abasement, condescendence,” whether on the part of a subordinate (as a monk before his abbot) or of a superior (as of God showing mercy). 27 Correlatively, inclinare means “to lower oneself in humility, bow, stoop, condescend.” 28 These Christian Latin senses of inclin- as a lowering oneself out of humility arguably span the lexicographer’s literal and figurative dichotomy. A lowering of the body signifies an interior, “figurative” lowering or submission to a superior,

24 Cf. Souter, s.v. inclinatus, “overcome, conquered,” citing Cassiodorus, Uar.
26 Ibid., s.v. “inclinatio,” “inclinatus,” “inclinis,” “inclino.” Souter includes very few citations and no quotations. See, e.g., Cassiodorus, In Ps. 118, 153 (using inclinis in the sense of “humble”).
27 Blaise Patristic, s.v. “inclinatio”: “(fig.) action de s’abaisser, condescendance,” citing Leo the Great, Serm. 28, 1; 28, 3 (“illam diuinae misericordiae ineffibilem inclinationem”).
28 Ibid., s.v. “inclinio”: “(moral.) abaisser” e.g., “opp. à erigere,” Ambrosiaster, c. 390 (“humilitas enim etiam superbas solet inclino”); passive or reflexive, “s’incliner, s’abaisser, condescendre,” e.g., Ambrosiaster, Qu. test. 97, 7 (“inclinari”); “s’incliner devant,” e.g., Ambrosiaster, Qu. test. 111 “uanitas cui qui se inclinat”), Ambrosiaster, c. 433 A (“caro factus hominibus se inclinavit”); Leo the Great, Serm. 27, 1 (“se i. ad humanis generis salutem”).
that is, a figurative “humiliation,” a lowering oneself toward the ground (humus, in Latin).\textsuperscript{29} The use of inclin-language in the \textit{Biblia sacra vulgata} and in Augustine’s work is briefly examined in Chapter II.

\textbf{3. Medieval Latin}

By “medieval” Latin, I mean the Latin of Christian authors from St. Isidore (d. 636) to St. Thomas’s own contemporaries. On the basis of my research in glossaries and databases of medieval Latin texts, it appears that various classical and patristic senses of inclin-terms, both literal and figurative, remain in tact in medieval Latin.\textsuperscript{30} Incremental to patristic usage, two developments in medieval usage merit further discussion.

\textit{a. Scholastic philosophical usage}

According to James Franklin, inclinatio is one of numerous classical Latin nouns the medieval scholastics distilled from their literal and literary senses into terms of philosophical abstraction.\textsuperscript{31} Computer database searches of medieval Latin texts suggest the use of inclin-terms in philosophical senses appear in various works.\textsuperscript{32} An early example is from Ven. Bede (672-735), who asks whether a certain “inclination of love” (inclinatio amoris) in man is from custom or nature.\textsuperscript{33} As the discussion in Chapter II of Albert the Great and other

\textsuperscript{29} Indeed it is not clear from the dictionaries whether an inclinatio in the sense of submitting to a superior necessarily involves a physical component. Consider the phrase, “to give the nod to” in English, i.e., to judge in favor of someone, which does not require an actual nodding of the head.


\textsuperscript{32} Although I make no claims about the relative frequency of “philosophical” versus physical-literal senses of inclin- in medieval Latin or classical Latin, the texts I have seen appear to support Franklin’s thesis.

\textsuperscript{33} Bede, \textit{Sententiae, sive axiomata philosophica ex Aristotele et aliis praestantibus collecta, una cum brevibus quibusdam explicationibus ac limitationibus} (PL, vol. 90): “quia amatio importat impetuosam inclinationem amoris, in ipsum appetitum, quae inclinatio causatur ex consuetudine. . . . [S]i non habeas istam
authors, as well as of the Latin translations of certain Greek and Arabic texts, suggests, these philosophical uses of *inclin*-terms seem to become increasingly common by the thirteenth century. William of Auvergne, for example, speaks of an “inclination of the intellectual power” (*inclinatio virtutis intellectivae*). But a narrow focus on the philosophical usage of *inclin*-terms, although relevant, distracts from another important, if more mundane, group of senses. This other group of senses, which pertain to submission to a ruler, may prove more significant for purposes of understanding St. Thomas’s distinctive meaning of *inclinatio naturalis* in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

*b. Inclinatio as submission to a ruler*

As discussed further below, a neglected text within the treatise on law speaks of a legislator that “inclines” his subjects and an “inclination” the subject receives from the legislator. This text arguably reflects an extension of the Late Latin senses of *inclin*-terms that pertain to humility and subjection, senses which remain in medieval Latin. In medieval Latin, apart from philosophical, theological, or ecclesiastical usage, *inclin*-terms begin to signify defined social, political, and legal relationships. Inclination as submission to God or to a religious superior (e.g., an abbott), becomes inclination as submission to an earthly lord.

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34 *De bono et malo*, par. 99, *Guillelmi Alverni Episcopi Parisiensis Opera Omnia*, vol. II (Paris 1674), 112-114 (emphasis added): “manifestum est quod intentio naturalis et inclinatio virtutis nostrae intellectivae est Primum Verum ac luminosissimum sive in primam ac luminosissimam Veritatem.” This text is briefly discussed in Chapter II.

35 *ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.157-8]: “Potest autem in his quae subduntur legi, aliqua inclinatio inveniri dupliciter a legislatore. Uno modo, inquantum directe inclinat suos subditos ad aliquid.”

36 Consistent with the Patristic sense of *inclinatio* as “abasement,” the Blaise *Lexicon Latinitatis medii aevi* (“Blaise Medievale”) defines *inclinatio* as “soumission, humiliation, abaissement, assujetissement” and *inclinatus* as “humble (lat. chr.)” Albert Blaise, *Lexicon Latinitatis medii aevi* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975) (“Blaise Medievale”), s.v. “inclinatio,” citing Innocent III, *D.C.*
In *Blaise Medievale*, *inclinati* is a synonym for “serfs” or “slaves.”[^37] *Inclinare* means “reduce to servitude.”[^38] Similarly, J. F. Niermeyer’s *Mediae latinitatis lexicon minus* lists six senses of *inclinare*, five of which have a political significance: (1) “to subdue,” (2) “to enslave,” (3) intransitive, “to submit to a lord,” (4) “to force, compel,” and . . . (6) passive, reflexive, “to stoop, humble oneself, deign.”[^39] Correspondingly, Niermeyer’s two senses of *inclinatio* are “subduing” and “condescendence.”[^40] How influential these senses are in St. Thomas’s thought is difficult to gauge, especially considering the absence of such usage in the usual sources that comprise the natural law tradition (see Chapter II). But the sense of “inclin ing” as “subduing”—if this subduing is understood in terms of nature, as distinguished from violence, arbitrary suppression, or enslavement, as will be made clear below and in subsequent chapters—echoes in St. Thomas’s reference to a human lawgiver “inclining” his subjects through legal command and punishment.[^41]

[^37]: *Blaise Medievale*, s.v. “inclinatio”: “serfs, esclaves.”

[^38]: Ibid., s.v. “inclino”: “asservir, réduire en servitude,” citing Conc. Aurel. an. 549, c. 6 (M.G.H. Conc. I, p. 102); and “forcer, contraindre,” citing ibid., p. 104.

[^39]: J. F. Niermeyer and C. Van de Kieft, *Mediae latinitatis lexicon minus* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), s.v. “inclinare.” E.g., *inclinare* as subduing: “Inclinavit Suavos sub regno Langobardorum.” Ibid., citing *Origo Langob.* (ca. a. 670, *Scr. rer. Langob.*). Niermeyer focuses on terms of art from the “wide field of law and institutions” during the years 550 to 1150: “The essential enlargement of the Latin vocabulary must be sought … in that great body of technical words which served to denote the concepts belonging to the wide field of law and institutions, to describe the social facts referred to in charters, laws and chronicles.” Ibid., 13. Similarly, see the first meaning of *inclinare* in the Du Cange glossary of late and middle Latin: “Ad servitutem repetere, revocare, *ad servitium interpellare.*” Charles du Fresne (sieur du Cange), *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, ed. L. Favre (Niort, 1883-1887) (“Du Cange”), s.v. “inclinare,” quoting *Synodo Remensi* 3, can. 19. Cf. *Blaise Medievale*: “1. asservir, réduire en servitude; 2. forcer, contraindre.” These senses may have an antecedent in classical Latin, in which *inclinatio* and *inclinare* sometimes means a bending *downwards*, sinking, or being brought down (literally or figuratively). Thomas, other than in reference to a bowing of the head, rarely (if ever) uses *inclinare* in the sense of declining; notably, *inclinatio naturalis* is not limited to a downward direction: e.g., he frequently speaks of the natural inclination of fire to move upwards (*sursum*). See Appendix.


[^41]: ST I-II, q. 90, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 7.149]; q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.157-8]. See below regarding extrinsic, “regnative” inclination.
4. St. Thomas's Usage of Inclin-terms

St. Thomas frequently uses noun and verb forms of *inclin-* in various senses. His usage of these terms reflects that of his age, but is nevertheless distinctive in its emphasis. Nearly every case of *inclin-* in the corpus falls within one of three groups of senses: (1) the primary senses of classical Latin, both “physical” and figurative senses, namely those corresponding to bending, bowing, or leaning, in both transitive and intransitive variants; (2) social and “political” senses that entail both submitting (intransitive) out of obedience and subduing (transitive) through the command of a superior agent (*paterfamilias*, prince, or God) disposing his subjects towards an end determined by the superior; and (3) also, by further extension, philosophical senses of “disposition” and “disposing,” which can be either transitive senses, in which one agent inclines another agent “from the outside,” or reflexive, intransitive senses, in which a nature or appetitive power inclines itself from within. In terms of modern lexicographical convention, as described in the Introduction, one would be constrained to say that the first of these three senses is the “literal” sense, while the second (political) and third (philosophical) senses are “figurative.”

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42 The verb and noun forms of *inclin-* are the only forms Thomas uses in the context of natural law. The adjectival form *inclinabilis* appears only once in the corpus, used in a figurative sense to mean “prone”—in this case, to evil. In *II Sent.*, d. 43, q. 1, a. 4, ad 3 [Mand. 2.1106]: “in malum facile inclinabilis est.” In classical Latin, *inclinabilis* can mean either “that readily leans to any thing, prone” or, the opposite, “not to be moved or bent (lat. Lat.).” Lewis & Short, s.v. “inclinabilis.” Only a few other words in Thomas’s lexicon share the stem “-clin.” *Declinare*, although sometimes translated as “incline,” usually has the special sense of turning away from or avoiding—as from evil, in contrast to doing good. See *ST II-II*, q. 79, a. 1, args. 1-3 and s.c. [Leon. 9.168] (“ad iustitiam legis pertinere declinare a malo et facere bonum”); ibid., co. (“facere bonum est actus completivus iustitiae . . . Declinare autem a malo est actus imperfection”); ibid., ad 1, ad 2, and ad 3. Lewis & Short define *declinatio* as, in general, “a bending from a thing, a bending aside; an oblique inclination or direction” and (trop.) “a turning away from any thing, an avoiding, avoidance.” Lewis & Short, s.v. “declinatio.” See *In I Post. an.*, lect. 1, n. 6 [Leon. 1.139-40]; *In II Eth.*, l. 11, n. 13. But where Thomas expresses the notion of a natural avoidance, he sometimes uses NI-terms; that is, man has certain “negative” natural inclinations, e.g., to avoid ignorance (*ST II-II*, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.169-70]). The only other -*clin* words are *acclinis* (“leaning on,” *ST II-II*, q. 161, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 10.292]) and *triclinium* (a three-part couch, *Lect. super Ioann.*, cap. 2, lect. 1; *Catena in Ioann.*, cap. 2, lect. 2 [Vivès 3.5]).
However, in the pages ahead, I shall argue that these latter senses, and especially the philosophical senses, should not be deemed figurative. In Thomistic terms, if we take “figurative” to mean metaphorical predication according to the analogy of improper proportionality, these latter, extended senses of inclin- are not metaphors. Instead, these senses are analogous to the earlier, now so-called “literal” senses, according to the analogy of proper proportionality. Although these latter two senses are certainly extensions of the physical sense, one could argue that, in St. Thomas’s philosophical usage, the abstract sense of inclinatio as a certain kind of disposition has itself become, according to common scholastic usage, a proper sense of the term. In this way, it would be more accurate to say that all three of these senses are related to each other according to the analogy of proper proportionality for this reason: the original ratio propria, which is better known quoad nos, is physical leaning, but in St. Thomas’s Latin, the ratio communis, which is the basis of the analogy, is the disposition of an agent towards a determinate end. This point requires explanation.

a. St. Thomas’s use of classical senses: physical or figurative bending, bowing, or leaning

St. Thomas’s usage of inclinare and inclinatio includes what the dictionary writers call the “literal” (= physical) senses of “bending” or “leaning” within space. In other words, it involves some locomotion either taking place (bending) or already having taken place (already bent). In Thomistic terms, these are the “proper” (proprius) senses, which is to say the senses originally imposed, those that are most familiar to us as creatures whose knowledge comes through sensibles. Recall that proprius here does not mean, as its English cognate, “proper,” suggests, that it is the “real” meaning or the “most correct” meaning.
Using the modern lexicographers’ literal-figurative dichotomy rather than the Thomistic proprie-translate distinction, Roy Deferrari’s *Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas* gives several “literal” (i.e., physical) senses of the verb *inclino*, -are, -avi, -atum.* In general, the active sense of *inclinare* is to “cause to lean, bend, incline, turn a thing in any direction; to bend down, bow a thing.” Physical senses of the verb can be either intransitive (reflexive) or transitive. That is, the agent inclines (bends) either itself, some part of itself, or another thing towards an object. Deferrari does not give a literal definition under the entry for the word *inclinatio*, but his examples for the literal sense of the verb *inclino-* include both noun and verb instances, e.g., bending one’s head downwards towards a person (e.g., *inclinatio capitis*) and bending one’s self (*inclinat se*) (i.e., bowing). *44*

St. Thomas uses *inclin-* in these “proper” physical senses only in the context of scriptural commentary; these cases comprise well under one percent of all cases of *inclin-* terms in the corpus. It should be further noted that even these texts that involve a physical meaning usually convey a concomitant, extended meaning of showing respect or obedience, which is, as we have seen, characteristic of patristic usage and Sacred Scripture. *45* For

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*45* Lect. super Ioann., cap. 19, lect. 5, commenting on John’s use of the expression *inclinato capite* (“Non enim est intelligendum quia tradidit spiritum, ideo inclinavit caput; sed e converso: nam inclinatio capitis obedientiam designat”); *In IV Sent.*, d. 24, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 3, s.c. 2 [Parma 7/2.901], in quot. (“cui omnes iure divino caput inclinant”); *STIII*, q. 83, a. 5, ad 5 [Leon. 12.281-82]: (“Quod autem manus interdum iungit, et inclinat se, suppliciter et humiliter orans, designat humilitatem et obedientiam Christi’’); Lect. super Psalmo 16, n. 2, in quot. (“dicit, inclina, nisi dominus sit in alto loco, oportet quod inclinet aurem ad audiendum illum qui
example, in commenting on St. John the Evangelist’s participle expression *inclinato capite*, used in reference to Our Lord at the moment of His death on the cross, St. Thomas insists that this inclining is not the lifeless downward motion of the head after death, but rather a deliberate act of obedience: “It is not to be understood that, since he gave up the spirit, therefore his head inclined; but instead the opposite: for the inclination of the head signifies obedience.”

In one text, the meaning is metaphorical—i.e., predicated according to the analogy of improper proportionality: the Psalmist asks God to “incline your ear,” that is, to listen to a prayer.

For St. Thomas, the “literal” sense of this passage (i.e., the sense intended by the author) pertains to God’s reception of the petition, which does not involve any physical ear or motion of a body part in the proper sense. But this metaphorical case is not representative of St. Thomas’s own usage of *inclin*-terms.

St. Thomas uses the terms *inclinare* and *inclinatio* in several distinct senses which Deferrari identifies as “figurative.” One of these is the definition of the active verb *inclinare* as: “to incline, bend the mind, heart, will, etc., towards some course of action.” Similarly,
the neuter, passive form of *inclinare* means “to incline to, be favorably disposed towards a thing.”\(^{49}\) The corresponding sense of the noun *inclinatio*, -onis is “an inclination . . . the condition of being mentally inclined or disposed to something, or an instance of such condition; a tendency or bent of the mind, will, or desires towards a particular object; disposition, propensity, [y]earning.”\(^{50}\) In Thomistic terms, these are, in any event, certainly extended senses of *inclinare* and *inclinatio*. But is “inclining the heart” in this sense metaphorical in the same way that the expression “incline your ear, oh Lord!” is metaphorical? The two are different in this way: the Lord has no “ear” to “bend” (physical sense), but the King does have a “heart” that can be, in an extended sense, “inclined.”\(^{51}\) “Incline” here has arguably been extended to the point at which the word itself signifies not the physical bending in the terms original, proper sense, but the *ratio communis* of a favorable disposition. This point will be developed further.

Drawing ever nearer to the topic at hand, *inclinatio naturalis*, consider again Deferrari’s definition of *inclinatio* as “an inclination, “(fig.) . . . disposition, propensity, [y]earning.”\(^{52}\) Applied to “things inanimate,” *inclinatio*, in this sense, means, “the natural tendency or affinity of inorganic substances, which impels them towards what is suitable to their nature.”\(^{53}\) In general, the notion of *inclinatio* as a propensity or yearning on the part of a person has precedents in classical Latin, e.g., a jurist’s inclination towards a particular legal opinion in a disputed matter. As applied to nature, however, *inclin*-terms take on an abstract,

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\(^{50}\) Ibid.

\(^{51}\) Biblical evidence suggests that the ancient Hebrews regarded the heart—the physical organ—as the seat of emotion and intellect. See *Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: Funk & Wagnall, 1906), s.v. “heart.” Accordingly, when Sacred Scripture says that God inclines the heart of the king, it means the king’s heart.

\(^{52}\) Ibid.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.
philosophical character proper to scholasticism and especially to St. Thomas’s personal lexicon, about which I will say more.

Before turning to the philosophical analysis, however, there is one outlier sense, indubitably classical, that should be noted. Commenting on Aristotle’s *De caelo*, St. Thomas uses *inclinatio* in a static, geometrical sense of what we would call “an incline” (noun, meaning “inclined plane”). He writes, “If a pillar anywhere on earth is not erected according to right angles, but with an inclination, it will fall in the direction with which it makes an acute angle.”\(^54\) But St. Thomas here is not talking about an “incline” in a purely geometrical sense. Instead, he means the natural inclination of the column, considered as a heavy body, towards the center of the earth.\(^55\)

*b. Regnative senses: inclination as obeying and being commanded*

As we have seen, in medieval Latin, *inclin-*terms can have the political sense of subduing by, or submitting to, a ruler. Reflecting this usage, by extension from the physical sense of inclining-as-bending (of the body or the head), St. Thomas uses *inclin-*language to describe the bending of one’s will towards the will of a superior agent, both transitively (bending another towards one’s purposes) and intransitively (bending oneself towards the thing that one is commanded to do by another). The two senses are perfectly united in the Lord Jesus Christ’s bowing of his head at the moment of death on the cross in the text discussed above (*Lect. super Ioann.*, cap. 19, lect. 5). What has this gloss on scripture to do with natural inclination?

\(^54\) *In II De caelo*, lect. 26, n. 6 [Leon. 3.219]: “Si columna in quacumque parte terrae non statuatur secundum rectos angulos, sed inclinationem habens, cadet versus illam partem ex qua facit angulum acutum.”

\(^55\) Ibid.
When St. Thomas says in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 that the precepts of the natural law follow upon the order of the natural inclinations, it would seem that precept (command, rule) is something entirely different from inclination (leaning, tendency), and even more different from *natural* inclination (biological urge). But if the blinders of English usage of “inclination” and “incline” are set aside, an investigation of St. Thomas’s usage of *inclin-* terms discloses that there is a sense in which commanding is *through* inclining and that, in the case of natural inclination, the *inclinatio* is the result of a command—i.e., of God’s command. These are what I call St. Thomas’s “regnative” senses of *inclin-* terms. As I shall attempt to show (in a preliminary way in this chapter and in more detail in Chapter VII), the inclination of nature, for St. Thomas, is at the same time God’s inclining of the thing and the thing’s inclining of itself.

Consider several striking examples of St. Thomas’s use of *inclin-* terms in this transitive, “regnative” sense. In one text, St. Thomas speaks of God commanding “by inclining.” Thus, *modo inclinando*, God commands a worm to consume ivy. In the same way, He commands Semei to curse David, “by inclining his heart.” Also, in the treatise on law, St. Thomas says that a human legislator “inclines” (*inclinat*) his subjects through

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56 “Regnative,” as in pertaining to kingly rule. Thomas does not use this term to describe inclination, but it is apt nevertheless.

57 This is not to reduce *inclinatio naturalis* to a crude occasionalism in which every natural phenomenon is simply the direct intervention of God, according to his inscrutable “purposes.” In the case of natural inclination, the divine inclining takes place through the intermediary of form, which is both given by God and is that upon which inclination intrinsically follows. See Chapter VII for discussion of divine direction through form.

58 *De pot.*, q. 1, a. 6, ad 4 [Marietti 22]: “Dicitur enim Deus dupliciter praecepere. Uno modo loquendo spiritualiter vel corporaliter per substantiam creatam; et sic praecepit Abrahæ et prophetis. Alio modo inclinando, sicut dicitur praecepisse vermi ut comederet hederam, *Ioniae I*. Et per hunc modum praecepit Semei ut malediceret David, in quantum cor eius inclinavit.”
legislation. In grammatical terms, St. Thomas, in these texts, is using *inclin-*terms in a transitive sense: an external agent, usually God or a human ruler, “inclines” his subjects towards the end conceived by that agent. As Deferrari describes it, the active sense of *inclinare* is to “cause to lean, bend, incline, turn a thing in any direction; to bend down, bow a thing.” Analogously, it means “to incline, bend the mind, heart, will, etc., towards some course or action.” In this sense, a thing does not simply “have an inclination.” Rather, the thing *is inclined* (passive, immanent) by an external agent that *inclines* (active, transitive) that thing. One agent inclines another. For example, according to Holy Scripture, God “will incline” (*inclinabit*) a man’s heart in whatever direction he (God) chooses. Angels and celestial bodies also “incline” man. These extrinsic inclinations are not necessarily arbitrary or “heteronomic” in a pejorative sense; they need not be violent, coercive, or contrary to nature. God “inclines all things” to himself (as to their ultimate end) and “directly inclines

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59 ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.157-8]: “Potest autem in his quae subduntur legi, aliqua inclinatio inveniri dupliciter a legislatore. Uno modo, inquantum directe inclinat suos subditos ad aliquid . . .” Deferrari lists a figurative sense of *inclinare*, used with *ut* and the subjunctive, as “to decree, ordain.” R. J. Deferrari, *Lexicon*, s.v. “inclinare.”

60 My use of the term “transitive” with respect to divine action on creatures is intended only to show the grammatically transitive sense of *inclin-*terms and therefore to call attention to the divine, extrinsic aspect of *inclinatio*. God’s “legislative” action through natural law is not transitive in the sense of a human ruler’s legislative posit or violent constraint. As Michael Baur explains, “God’s action in moving us is not the transitive action of one being in relation to another, but rather the creative action of God who gives us being in the first place and thus who can never act upon us externally or violently.” Michael Baur, “Law and Natural Law,” in *Oxford Handbook on Aquinas*, eds. Brian Davies and Eleanor Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 250.

61 Schütz does not have an entry for any *inclin-*terms.


63 E.g., *ST* I, q. 106, a. 2 [Leon. 5.483-84] (“*Angelus* inclinat eam, ut amabile quoddam, et ut manifestans aliqua bona creat in ordinata in Dei bonitatem. Et per hoc inclinare potest ad amorem creaturae vel Dei, per modum suadentis”); *De ver.*, q. 5, a. 10, ad 7 [Leon. 22/1.171:241-53] (“magis est probable de aliqua multitudine quod operetur id ad quod inclinat corpus caeleste, quam de uno singulari”; *In II De sensu*, lect. 1, n. 8 (inclination as celestial disposition).

64 On the Kantian pseudo-problem of heteronomous natural law, see Matthew Levering, *Biblical Natural Law*, 124-25.
the will” to good.65 “The Holy Spirit,” St. Thomas writes, “inclines us to act of our own will, freely, out of love, not as bondsmen prompted by fear” and “inclines the will to true good, its natural object.”66 But extrinsic inclining can also be sinister. In the prooemium to ST I-II, q. 90, St. Thomas states: “The extrinsic principle inclining [inclinans] to evil is the Devil, whose temptations were spoken of in the first part.”67

St. Thomas sometimes speaks of commanding by inclination (or inclining by command) in a legislative sense in several places. In one text he says, in a comparison with natural inclination, “any member of the household is inclined [inclinatur] to act through the precept of the head of the family.”68 Also, the legislator “inclines” (inclinat) his subjects through law.69 Human positive law exists, not only in the lawgiver, but also (by a sort of participation) as an inclination in the subject who is ruled and measured by such law: “law is in all who are inclined (inclinantur) to something from a certain law.”70 This inclination presupposes the legislator’s intentio, a tendency to an end: “intention belongs first and


66 SCG IV, cap. 22, n. 5 [Leon. 15.83]: “Spiritus . . . sanctus sic nos ad agendum inclinat ut nos voluntarie agere faciat. . . . [S]piritus sanctus per amorem voluntatem inclinet in verum bonum, in quod naturaliter ordinatur.”

67 ST I-II, q. 90, pr. [Leon. 7.149]: “Principium autem exterius ad malum inclinans est Diabolus, de cuius tentatione in primo dictum est.”

68 In XII Meta., lect. 12, n. 2634 [Marietti 741]: “Sicuti enim qui est in domo per praeceptum patrisfamilias ad aliquid inclinatur, ita aliqua res naturalis per naturam propriae. Et ipsa natura uniuscuiusque est quaedam inclinatio indita ei a primo movente, ordinans ipsam in debitu finem. Et ex hoc patet, quod res naturales agunt propter finem, licet finem non cognoscant, quia a primo intelligente assequuntur inclinationem in finem.”

69 ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.157-58]: “alia inclinatio inveniri dupliciter a legislatore. Uno modo, inquantum directe inclinat suos subditos ad aliquid. Cf. In IV Sent., d. 36, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2 [Parma 7/2.995], suggesting punishment by inclination: “natura etiam inclinat ut ex peccato poenam reportet; et sic servitus in poenam peccati introducta est.”

70 ST I-II, q. 90, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 7.149]: “lex est in omnibus quae inclinantur in aliquid ex aliqua lege.” The lawgiver imparts an inclination to his subjects in two ways: directly and indirectly. ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.157-8].
principally to that which moves to the end: hence we say that an architect or anyone who is in authority, by his command moves others to that which he intends.”  

In the case of human law, this inclination is imparted upon the subject by promulgation, which “imprints on man a directive principle of human actions.”

Are these regnative senses merely metaphorical? Here again, in the earliest extension of these terms to political matters, such predication would be in relation to the ratio propria (i.e., physical “bending”). As Charles de Koninck observes, the word “manifest,” if it still properly referred only to a “seizing with the hand,” could be predicated only metaphorically of anything else. Likewise, in this case, if the only proper meaning of “incline” were still to “bend” or “bow” in a physical sense, to say a ruler “inclinates his subjects” (unless, of course, it refers to the application of direct, physical force) would be a metaphor.

But as I have suggested, the process of extension in the case of inclin-terms, in St. Thomas’s usage, has arguably reached the point at which the terms signify a ratio communis. As Ralph McInerny explains, “Since we first know sensible things, the transfer of their names to non-sensible things must first involve a metaphor. Then, with the sanction of usage and the recognition of a common notion, these names become analogous.”

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71 ST I-II, q. 12, a. 1 [Leon. 7.94]: “intentio primo et principaliter pertinet ad id quod movet ad finem, unde dicimus architectorem, et omnem praeipientem, movere suo imperio alios ad id quod ipse intendit.”
72 ST I-II, q. 93, a. 5, ad 1 [Leon. 7.166]: “hoc modo se habet impressio activi principii intrinseci, quantum ad res naturales, sicut se habet promulgatio legis quantum ad homines, quia per legis promulgationem imprimitur hominibus quoddam directivum principium humanorum actuum.”
74 Ralph McInerny, Logic of Analogy, 152.
his (the ruling agent’s) own ends. To the human subjects of such regnatory inclining, the inclination is certainly real, though not, in itself, physical.75

c. Philosophical senses: determinate disposition of a power or nature

Deferrari’s definitions, noted above, of the active verb inclinare as (active, transitive) “to incline, bend the mind, heart, will, etc., towards some course of action,” and (neuter, passive) “to incline to, be favorably disposed towards a thing” are classical.76 In English, “I am inclined to accept the invitation” is an example of an English sense of “inclined” that is comparable to inclinatus in the classical, “figurative” sense of being favorably disposed to something. Correspondingly, Deferrari’s first definition of the noun inclinatio, -onis, is “an inclination . . . fig., the condition of being mentally inclined or disposed to something, or an instance of such condition; a tendency or bent of the mind, will, or desires towards a particular object; disposition, propensity, [y]earning.” Likewise, the verb inclinare means “to tend towards some condition; to have some attribute in an incipient degree.”77 These senses can include natural inclination understood as an innate disposition, but they also include dispositions that following upon passion and habit. For example, St. Thomas speaks of a man being “inclined by affection” (inclinari per affectum) to this or that thing.78

But these figurative definitions are ambiguous in that they can mean either (1) inclinations or inclinings of, say, the mind in an ordinary classical sense of leaning towards a

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75 But resisting the ruler’s inclination could result in physical consequences in the form of corporal punishment.
76 Deferrari, s.v. “inclinare” (italics in original). E.g., In Rom. 10, lect. 2, n. 844 [Marietti, 157]: “cordis inclinatio ad credendum,” “Cornelius . . . habebat cor inclinatum ad credendum.” Cf., ST I-II, q. 102, a. 5, ad 10 [Leon. 7.246], suggesting indecisiveness: “Ne sit claudus, idest instabilis, et ad diversa se inclinans.” In some cases, the sense might be both physical-literal and analogical, e.g., ST II-II, q. 162, a. 3, ad 1, in quot. [Leon. 10.316]: “dicatur, Eccli. VI, si inclinaveris aurem tuam. Scilicet humiliter audiendo.”
77 Ibid.
78 In IV Sent., d. 50, q. 2, a. 1, qc. 1 [Parma 7/2.1253]
particular opinion; or (2) the inclination of a power to its proper object (e.g., of the intellect to truth or of the will to the good) in a sense proper to scholastic philosophy.

Notably, St. Thomas seldom uses inclin-language in the ordinary classical way, and when he does, it is usually not in his own voice but rather in a quotation or the context of commenting on another text, usually Sacred Scripture, as we have seen. Instead, he far more frequently uses inclin-words as terms of philosophical abstraction. As explained in section E below and in subsequent chapters, these abstract senses of inclination include inclinations of powers of the soul, violence, celestial influence, grace, and, above all, nature. These are the abstract, philosophical senses James Franklin identifies as characteristic of scholastic Latin, as noted above. The type of inclination that most concerns us is natural inclination, which Deferrari defines as follows, “of things inanimate, the natural tendency or affinity of inorganic substances, which impel them towards what is suitable to their nature.” This is the philosophical sense of inclinatio that chiefly concerns us.

5. Combined Expressions: Inclinatio Naturalis, Natura Inclinat, and Related Forms

a. NI-terms: lexicographical findings

The aim of philosophy is not to “know what men have thought.” Still less is it to know how many times men have said what they were thinking. A statistical profile of a term in an author’s lexicon can nevertheless help account for the relative importance of the term.

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70 See Franklin, “Mental Furniture of the Philosophers,” 181, discussed above. I have not attempted to count the actual number of cases of philosophical uses of inclin-terms as opposed to ordinary classical senses. In rough terms, of the more than 2,200 cases of inclin-terms throughout the corpus, more than 700 cases pertain to natural inclination, and many hundreds of other cases pertain to inclinations of the sensitive and rational appetites, or of violence, celestial influence, or grace. See discussion of “NI-terms” below for more statististical information.

80 Deferrari, s.v. “inclinatio” (italics in original).

81 In I De coelo, lect. 22, n. 8 [Leon. 3.91]: “Studium philosophiae non est ad hoc quod sciatur quid homines senserit.” The purpose instead is to possess the truth about things. Ibid.
and its relationship to other terms. Such a profile, in this case, shows the daunting nature of the task of identifying and categorizing all instances of the term. Relevant to these purposes, a series of searches in Roberto Busa’s online Corpus Thomisticum yields several noteworthy results.\textsuperscript{82} There are 2,268 cases (in 1,220 places) of terms with the inflectional root (i.e., stem) \textit{inclin}-. By comparison, there are 6,547 cases of \textit{appet}-terms (e.g., \textit{appetitus}, \textit{appetere}) and 272 cases of \textit{instinct}-terms (\textit{instinctus} and related forms, but excluding forms of \textit{instinguere}). Another point of comparison, more directly relevant to this study, is the fact that there are a staggering 38,276 cases of \textit{natur}-terms throughout the corpus.

To identify each case in which the two terms, \textit{inclin}- and \textit{natur}-, are used together is not a simple matter of running searches for the terms \textit{inclinatio naturalis} and \textit{natura inclinat}.\textsuperscript{83} Taking into account word order and the multiple inflections according to number, case, and mood, the total of all combinations of \textit{inclin}- and \textit{natur}-, where the two terms are not separated by other words (or punctuation), there are 408 cases within 285 textual units (of which 37 cases are within objections).\textsuperscript{84} There are only two cases of NI-terms within direct quotes, which emphasizes the distinctiveness of St. Thomas’s NI-lexicon.\textsuperscript{85} All other cases are \textit{in voce sua}.

\textsuperscript{82} Only works designated “authentic” are included. I conducted these searches using the stem plus an asterisk, which catches all inflections, e.g., “inclin*,” “appet*,” “instinct*,” etc.

\textsuperscript{83} Because Latin nouns and verbs are inflected according to case, tense, etc., there are not only four distinct “lemmas” (\textit{natura; naturalis; inclinare; and inclinatio}), but also dozens of distinct forms of each lemma, and scores of permutations of these forms in NI-combinations. “A lemma is that form of a word which serves as a title entry in a lexicon for all its other forms.” Tomarchio, “Thomistic Axiomatics,” 265-66, n. 1.

\textsuperscript{84} Word order can vary (e.g., n-term first: \textit{naturalis inclinatio}), as well as number (e.g., \textit{inclinationes naturales}) and case (e.g., \textit{inclinationis naturae}). A good example is the plural genitive, \textit{inclinatio} \textit{naturalium}, of which there is only one case which happens to be the central case in this study: \textit{ST I-II}, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]).

\textsuperscript{85} \textit{Catena in Luc.}, cap. 12, lect. 2 [Vivès 2.334], in quot., St Ambrose (“\textit{voluptas . . . in naturam corporeae molis inclinat}”); \textit{Catena in Luc.}, cap. 13, lect. 3 [Vivès 2.357], in quot., St. Gregory the Great (“\textit{significat ficulnea infructuosa quod mulier inclinata}”).
But the count does not stop there. In many additional cases the two terms are separated by one or more words, even while forming a grammatically and philosophically intelligible unit (e.g., *natura etiam inclinat*).\(^8\) In other cases, there is no *natur-*term, but it can be inferred from the context that the *inclinatio* in question is “natural” (*naturalis*) or “of nature” (*naturae*).\(^7\) Taking these complications into account, the research method used in this study yielded in excess of 700 cases of NI-terms.\(^8\) Of these, many cases—by no means a majority—are found in texts that expressly discuss natural law or in texts that are otherwise relevant to an underlying issue of ethics or the philosophy of human nature.\(^9\) In the *Summa theologiae*, the questions comprising the treatise on law alone contain fifty-four cases of *inclin-*terms, of which thirty-two cases are within NI-terms (of which only four cases are within objections).\(^9\)

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\(^6\) *In IV Sent.*, d. 36, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2 [Parma 7/2.995].

\(^7\) In some cases, the *inclin-*term in one sentence refers to a *natur-*term in an adjacent sentence. E.g., *ST I-II*, q. 94, a. 4, ad 3 [Leon. 7.172] (“omnes inclinationes naturales ad alias potentias pertinentes ordinentur secundum rationem. Unde hoc est apud omnes communiter rectum, ut secundum rationem dirigantur omnes hominum inclinationes.”); *ST I-II*, q. 93, a. 6, ad 2 [Leon. 7.167] (“in nullo homine ita prudentia carnis dominatur, quod totum bonum naturae corrumpatur. Et ideo remanet in homine inclinatio ad agendum ea quae sunt legis aeternae”).

\(^8\) I have not calculated an exact number due to the diminishing utility of determining such a number with confidence, relative to the philosophical value of doing so.

\(^9\) But a larger number of cases are in a variety of contexts, usually relating to the inclinations and motions of natural things, either considered in themselves or used as analogies to illustrate theological points. For example, the natural inclinations Thomas most frequently references are those of heavy bodies to move downwards (*deorsum*) (44 cases) and of fire to move upwards (*sursum*) (14 cases). See Appendix for text citations.

\(^9\) *ST I-II*, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154] (“omnia participant alqualiter legem aeternam, inquantum scilicet ex impressione eius habent inclinationes in proprios actus et fines . . . in ipsa participatur ratio aeterna, per quam habet naturalem inclinationem ad debitum actum et finem”); q. 91, a. 4, arg. 3 [Leon. 7.156] (“irrationales creaturae non habent aliquam legem divinam praeter inclinationem naturalem eis inditam”); q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.157-8] (“sub Deo legislatore diversae creaturae diversas habent naturales inclinationes”); q. 93, a. 6 [Leon. 7.166-7] (“unicuique rationali creaturae inest naturalis inclinatio ad id quod est consonum legi aeternae”; “inclinatio naturalis ad virtutem depravatur per habitum vitiosum”; “supra naturalem inclinationem ad bonum, superadditur eis interius movitum gratiae et virtutis”); q. 93, a. 6, ad 2 [Leon. 7.167] (“in nullo homine ita prudentia carnis dominatur, quod totum bonum naturae corrumpatur. Et ideo remanet in homine inclinatio ad agendum ea quae sunt legis aeternae”); q. 94, a. 2, arg. 2 [Leon. 7.169] (“secundum multitudinem partium humanae naturae. Et sic oportebit quod etiam ea quae sunt de inclinatione concupiscibilis, pertinent ad legem naturalem”); q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170] (see Introduction for text); q. 94, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.170] “omnes
b. NI-terms: chronology and development of doctrine

Although the question of whether there is a chronological development of St. Thomas’s NI-doctrine could be the subject of a separate investigation, I have not undertaken a comprehensive chronological analysis. I am able, however, to make two observations regarding chronology, one general and the other specifically related to natural law. First, NI-terms, used in the full range of senses characteristic of St. Thomas’s lexicon, appear frequently in several major works spanning St. Thomas’s career. As an illustration of the relatively even distribution, there are twenty-six cases (including two within objections) of NI-terms in book IV of the Commentary on the Sentences (c. 1255) and thirty-six cases (including five within objections) of NI-terms in part secunda secundae of the Summa theologiae (c. 1270). As further discussed in Chapter II, it does not appear that any single received text prompts St. Thomas to adopt NI-terms at a specific point in his career.

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91 In the Appendix, “Index of Natural Inclinations According to St. Thomas Aquinas,” the texts cited in each sub-category of natural inclinations are set forth in chronological order. Many of these sub-categories illustrate the chronological range, with numerous citations to major works from the Commentary on the Sentences through the Commentary on the De caelo.
Second, as we have seen, NI-language is prominent in the text of ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, a text which is reasonably regarded as St. Thomas’s “mature” teaching on natural law.92 The threefold schema of inclinations set forth in this text, as expressed in NI-terms, does not appear in his earlier works. But NI-terms, as used to describe natural law, do not first appear in the treatise on law. Indeed, the various “pieces” or levels of the threefold schema are severally identified in various earlier works, often described using NI-terms is not new to the treatise on law, nor to the Summa theologiae otherwise. For example, St. Thomas frequently uses NI-language in discussions of natural law, justice, and the various parts and powers of human nature in the Commentary on the Sentences and elsewhere.93 As suggested in Chapter II, certain problems St. Thomas faces in the Sentences commentary are resolved in part through his natural inclination approach in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, but this development of his

92 On Thomas’s “mature thought on the essence of the natural law” as distinguished from his earlier formulations, see Michael Crowe, The Changing Profile of Natural Law (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), 142.

93 Texts referring to natural inclinations of man in the Commentary on the Sentences and the De veritate include the following, arranged according to each of the three levels of man’s natural inclination, substance, animal, and rational being:

Man as substance: NI of man as sentient spiritual substance (De ver., q. 23, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.652-53:109-95]); nature inclines to the love of wealth insofar as through those things man preserves human life (In IV Ethic., lect. 5, n. 2 [Leon. 47/2.215:17-25]); NI to self-love (In III Sent., d. 29, q. 1, a. 5, s.c. 3 [Moos 3.934]); NI to things pertaining to the conservation of the bodily nature is not universally evil (In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 3 [Parma 7/2.919]).

Man as animal: NI to procreate children (proles), through which the specific nature is conserved (In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 3 [Parma 7/2.919]); man’s sensitive nature inclines to desire those things which are delectible according to sense (In II Sent., d. 28, q. 1, a. 1 [Mand. 2.718]); powers of soul naturally inclines to proper object (De ver., q. 25, a. 2, ad 8 [Leon. 22/3.734:240-42]); NI to marriage (In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 1 and ad 1-2 [Parma 7/2.918]; In IV Sent., d. 27, q. 2, a. 2 [Parma 7/2.932]); NIs towards family members (In III Sent., d. 29, q. 1, a. 7 and ad 1 [Moos 3.941-42]; In III Sent. d. 37, q. 1, a. 2, qc. 1, ad 5).

Man as rational: NI to happiness, contemplation, and the ultimate end (In III Sent., d. 23, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 3, ad 2 [Moos 3.715]; In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 3 [Parma 7/2.1193]; De ver., q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.624:196-199]; De ver., q. 22 a. 6 [Leon. 22/3.627:70-74]); NI of the will to good in general (In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1 [Mand. 2.992]); by NI free choice tends to the good, but does not have sufficient principle from within to complete it (De ver., q. 24, a. 10, ad 1 [Leon. 22/3.707:339-50]); NI of will to the good according to virtue (In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 1, s.c. 1 [Mand. 2.991]); NI to virtue (In III Sent. d. 29 q. 1 a. 3 [Moos 3.929]; In III Sent. d. 37 q. 1 a. 1; De ver., q. 11, a. 1 [Leon. 22/1.350:260-64]); NI to political society and common good (In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.918]; In III Sent., d. 33, q. 2, a. 4, qc. 3 [Moos 3.1065]; In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 2 and ad 4 [Parma 7/2.919]); natural reason inclines man to confess his sins (In IV Sent. d. 17, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, ad 1 [Moos 4.897]).
natural law doctrine is not accompanied by a fundamental shift in vocabulary toward NI-language.

c. Noun forms: natural inclination, inclination of nature

Throughout the corpus, the cases of NI-combinations most frequently found are those in which the inclin-term is a noun (inclinatio) and the natur-term is an adjective (naturalis) modifying the noun, with the terms appearing in either order. In the context of his definition of natural law as the participation of the rational creature in the eternal law (ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2), St. Thomas uses the expression “has a natural inclination.” Less frequent than noun-adjective forms, but still frequent, are noun-noun forms where natura is a noun, e.g., in the genitive case (inclinatio naturae). Especially important in the treatise on law, St. Thomas links NI-terms with the noun “man” (homo) to signify the inclination of the specific nature of the human being. In the body of his response in I-II, q. 94, a. 2, he uses the formulations

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94 E.g., ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.155] (“naturalem inclinationem ad debitum actum et finem”); q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.158] (“diversae creaturae diversas habent naturales inclinationes.”); q. 93, a. 6 [Leon. 7.166-7] (“inclinatio naturalis ad virtutem,” “naturalem inclinationem ad bonum,” and “unicuique rationali creaturae inest naturalis inclinationio ad id quod est consonum legi aeternae”); q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170] (“omnia illa ad quae homo habet naturalem inclinationem,” “Secundum . . . ordinem inclinationum naturalium, est ordo praecipuum legis naturae,” and “naturalem inclinationem ad hoc quod veritatem cognoscat de Deo”); q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170] (“naturalis inclinationio inest cui libet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem”); and q. 94, a. 4, ad 3 [Leon. 7.172] (“omnes inclinationes naturales”).

95 ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154]: “in ipsa participant ratio aeterna, per quam habet naturalem inclinationem ad debitum actum et finem. Et talis participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura lex naturalis dicitur.” In several places in the corpus, noun-adjective NI-combinations are compounded with necessitas, e.g. “necessity of natural inclination,” as distinct from the “necessity of force” (necessitas coactionis). De ver., q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.623:149-54]. Thomas also uses the seemingly redundant expression “by a certain natural inclination tends” (quadam naturali inclinatione tendit). In I Phys., lect. 10, n. 5 [Leon. 2.34].

96 E.g., ST II-II, q. 47, a. 7, ad 3 [Leon. 8.355] (“inclinatio naturae”); De pot., q. 2, a. 3, ad 6 [Marietti 31] (“Quamvis enim ad inclinationem naturae”); In II Ethic., lect. 1, n. 3 [Leon. 47/1.77:58-9] (“quamdam inclinationem ad modum naturae”). He also uses noun-noun forms in combination with the verb habeo, e.g. “has an inclination through nature” and “through natural things (naturalia) has an inclination.” In III Sent., d. 23, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 3 [Moos 3.715]. In at least one case, he uses a dative form of nature: natural things are directed to their end by the Divine Intellect giving (attribuente) to the nature an inclination. In II Sent., d. 38, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2 [Mand. 2.975]. In one text, Thomas says “there is in nature an inclination” (est in natura inclinationio). ST I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 6.60]. In the treatise on law, ST I-II, q. 101, a. 3 [Leon. 7.225], he uses the expression, “habentes inclinationem . . . ex natura.”
“there is in man an inclination according to nature” (inest homini inclinatio . . . secundum naturam) and “man has a natural inclination” (homo habet naturalem inclinationem). In his response to an objection, he uses the expression “all the inclinations of whatever parts of human nature” (omnes inclinationes quarumcumque partium humanae naturae).

d. Verb form: nature inclines (natura inclinat)

St. Thomas uses verb forms of NI-terms in philosophically equivalent senses, although less frequently than noun forms. Cases in the active voice (“nature inclines,” natura inclinat) appear in both natural law discussions and otherwise. Passive voice forms (“nature is inclined,” natura inclinationatur; “naturally inclined,” naturaliter inclinationatur) also appear in several variants. Participle forms (e.g., inclinans, inclinationis)—never used in the treatise on law—appear relatively infrequently throughout the corpus.
B. Philosophical Investigation: Teleological, Extrinsic, and Formal senses of NI-Terms

The foregoing lexicographical investigation is not ornamental. Its purpose is to help show the precise range and philosophical character of St. Thomas’s NI-lexicon. Three features of St. Thomas’s use of inclin-terms, both in connection with natur- and otherwise, are especially important to grasp: (1) inclinatio—whether natural or otherwise—is always teleological; (2) inclin-terms, although to varying degrees, have an extrinsic, “transitive” connotation of one agent inclining another agent, a sense which applies in a special way to natural inclination; and (3) inclin-terms nearly always refer (at least implicitly) to an inclination following upon some form and, in the case of NI-terms used in the natural law context, the inclination follows upon natural form, not upon matter, nor upon apprehended or supervenient form. Each of these aspects of St. Thomas’s usage of inclin-terms shows the properly analogical character of the word inclinatio. These aspects and, in turn, the analogical character of NI-language are easily overlooked if St. Thomas’s inclin-terms, as applied to nature, are taken in the philosophically impoverished senses of the modern English cognates “incline” and “inclination,” as further explained below. If, for example, inclinatio naturalis is taken to mean “natural inclination” in the narrow sense of a blind, purely intrinsic urge, the reader is likely to entirely miss the point of St. Thomas’s NI-language and, in turn, of his natural law doctrine.

nature” (inclinatur secundum suam naturam) pertain to the natural law. ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170]. These formulations refer to the the nature of man as a species, not the nature of any individual man. In some cases, in a natural law context, the natura-term in the verb-noun combination is specified as human nature, e.g., In V Ethic., lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:68-9]: “iustum naturale est ad quod hominem natura inclinat.”

101 In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 2, ad 5 [Mand. 2.993]: “inclinatio naturalis . . . est secundum exigentiam naturae inclinantis”; De ver., q. 16, a. 1, ad 11 [Leon. 22/2.506:360-61]: “habitus . . . naturaliter inclinans ad bonum pertinet ad superiorem partem”; SCG IV, cap. 78, n. 2 [Leon. 15.246]: “dirigitur in finem a natura inclinante in hunc finem: et sic dicitur esse naturae officium.”
1. Incl-terms Are Teleological

St. Thomas’s usage of *inclinatio* and *inclinare* is consistent with his realist philosophy of nature. For St. Thomas, every agent acts for an end and natural motion, accordingly, is always for a determinate end: “nature never inclines to movement for the sake of movement, but for the sake of some definite result to be obtained by movement.”

Inclination must be understood within this context. As every agent acts for an end, so every inclination, whether natural or otherwise, is toward some determinate end.

For St. Thomas, the very notion of inclination or inclining is unintelligible except in reference to some direction and goal, whether the goal be a human purpose, a natural end, or the end conceived by another agent (such as the Devil). The physical senses of *inclin-* (bending, leaning, bowing) are locomotive (i.e., involving motion towards a determinate place) in the sense that there is, or has been, local motion. This leaning and resultant local motion, in turn, are towards a determinate place. For St. Thomas, as for Aristotle, there is no motion that is not for an end. In the transitive sense, if the doctor bends the patient’s knee to determine its flexibility or the elephant bends the tree the better to reach edible foliage, the bending is towards a place and is for an end. Similarly, the man who bows his head in respect of his superior is not moving his head about willy-nilly but towards a determined place for a fixed purpose.

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102 *De pot.*, q. 5, a. 5 [Marietti 142]: “natura nunquam inclinat ad motum propter movere, sed propter aliquid determinatum quod ex motu consequitur; sicut natura gravis inclinat ad quietem in medio, et per consequens inclinat ad motum qui est deorsum, secundum quod tali motu in talem locum pervenit.”

103 The *OED* defines “lean,” in the sense relevant to this discussion as “To bend or incline in a particular direction (usually indicated by an adv. or adv. phr.). Const. from, over, towards . . . (Also in pass. in the same sense).” As explained in Chapter VII, inclination is not itself motion, but it always precedes or prompts motion.

104 It could be objected that there is no teleology in the case of an accidental leaning of, say, a utility pole struck by a drunk driver. Violent inclinations that result from chance events are subsumed under the
In the extended senses of *inclin-*-, although local motion is absent, the usage entails a real inclining, albeit in an extended, analogical sense. The original, “proper” sense of *inclinare* is a physical leaning or bowing, but the extended, *translatum*, sense of *inclinare* is sufficiently developed in scholastic Latin to the point that the *usus loquenti* sanctions the use of *inclin-*language to signify chiefly and properly a new *ratio communis*. As explained in the Introduction, the meaning of a word can be extended beyond its original *ratio propria* and then used in such a way that the extended meaning becomes a new, proper meaning, just as *lux* originally meant only physical light, but now, according to the *usus loquentius* of the scholastic theologians, properly signifies “all manifestation.”  

But in the case *inclinatio*, three questions demand explanation: (1) What is this *ratio communis* that links the original and philosophical senses of *inclin-*terms? (2) Is the extended sense of *inclinatio* in St. Thomas’s Latin sufficiently “extended” to qualify as a new meaning, proper in its own right, at a time when the original *ratio propria* of *inclinatio* as a bowing or bending of the head remains vivid in Scripture and in common usage? And (3) Why would it be misleading for scholars today to call *natural inclinatio* a metaphor (because it is transferred from the proper sense of deliberate bending) when St. Thomas himself says that, for example, *motus* is predicated “metaphorically” of operations of the intellect? (That is to say, what is wrong with saying that “natural inclination,” in St. Thomas’s philosophical usage, is a “metaphor”?)

*a. The ratio communis of inclinatio naturalis*

In the *De veritate*, q. 22, a. 12, St. Thomas gives a definition of *inclinatio* which ties together the word’s many senses with the common thread—the *ratio communis*—of

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intention of universal nature, which comprises the entire order of causality in the universe. On *natura universalis*, see Chapter V.

105 *ST* I, q. 67, a. 1 [Leon. 5.163]: “omne manifestatio.”
teleological motion: “An inclination is a disposition of something that moves other things as an efficient cause.” Does St. Thomas, by dispositio, mean a transient, unstable quality in Aristotle’s sense of the term? Does dispositio, at the “level” of nature, mean a transcendental relation? I examine these questions in Chapter VII. For now, on the strength of this text from the *De veritate*, I put forth the notion that some sort of disposition within an order of movers is the ratio communis. For St. Thomas, then, the inclination that signifies obedience, the inclination a lawgiver gives to his subjects, and the inclination of the “rational appetite” are not inclinations in the way that the meadow’s “smiling” or the general’s “out-foxing [of his adversary]” are “smiling” or “out-foxing,” which is to say, in a metaphorical way. On the contrary, these inclinations are true inclinations according to the common ratio of disposition in the context of motion towards a determinate end. The same is arguably true for both natural inclinations and the full gamut of philosophically significant inclinations that St. Thomas describes, including inclinations of habit, passion, violence, and grace.

*b. Inclinatio in an “achieved-literal” sense?*

As explained in the Introduction, a term in its extended meaning can come to signify something that is just as real, or even more perfectly real, than the thing that the term in its first imposition signified. A good example, as we have seen, is lux, which comes to signify

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106 *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 12 [Leon. 22/3.642-93-95]: “Inclinatio ... est dispositio moventis secundum quod efficiens movet.” The context is a discussion of whether the will moves the other powers of the soul *per modum causae agentis*. St. Thomas answers in the affirmative, in contrast to the intellect, which moves in the manner of a final cause. Ibid. The translation is from William R. O’Connor, “Natural Appetite,” *The Thomist* 16 (1953): 361-409.

107 This will be a recurring theme of discussion in this dissertation, and will be explained in more detail in Chapter VII, with particular reference to the *De veritate* text above.

108 The distinction between natural inclination, in the sense proper to natural law, and other types of inclinations is discussed in section E below. To say that, for example, the inclination of the habit of virtue is not a “natural” inclination is not to say that virtue is somehow unnatural. On the contrary, men have a natural inclination to virtue, as explained in Chapter IV (“Naturalis and the ‘Humanly Natural’”).
any “principle of manifestation,” whether corporeal (original sense) or spiritual (extended sense). As is the case with “light,” “inclination” has been “twisted out” of its original sense to the point at which it now has an extended meaning.

In one discussion of lux, McInerny relies in part on an essay by Owen Barfield on “The Meaning of the Word ‘Literal.’” Barfield examines English words such as “transgression” and “supercilious,” which have both “material” and “immaterial” meanings. To describe the historical development of these words, he distinguishes between the “vehicle,” meaning the material sense of word, and “tenor,” the immaterial sense. Each of these words, he argues, goes through four stages:

1. the first stage, in which they had an exclusively literal meaning and referred to a material object; a second stage, where they have taken on concomitant meanings; a third stage, in which they had a substituted meaning, though the original one had not quite vanished; and a fourth and final stage in which their meaning has again become (though much altered) exclusively literal.

Words at the first stage have a “born literal” sense, while words at the fourth stage have an “achieved literal” status.

It is not difficult to see that what Barfield calls the word’s “material,” “vehicular,” and “exclusively literal” meanings corresponds to what St. Thomas calls the ratio propria according to the word’s sensus primum impositus. At the other end of the scale, the “achieved literal” status seems to have been reached in the case in which a word has

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109 Light is “more truly” in spiritual things than in corporeal things. In II Sent., d. 13, q. 1, a. 2: “Lux verius est in spiritualibus quam in corporalibus, non secundum proprium rationem lucis, sed secundum rationem manifestationis.”
112 Ibid.
113 For the convenience of expository prose, I am using the term sensus primum impositus as a noun, “first-imposed sense.” St. Thomas, however, typically uses the expression, “the word by its first imposition” or the like. See, e.g., SCG IV, cap. 35, n. 5 [Leon. 15.126]: “Nomen naturae primo impositum est ad significandum ipsam generationem nascentium.”
exclusively come to have its extended meaning; it now signifies the new *ratio propria* rather than its original *ratio propria*, which is the case with *appetitus* and *intentio* (as I argue in the Introduction). In fact, at this stage, one need no longer speak of a *ratio communis* because the original sense has disappeared.

But how does *inclinatio* fit within this scheme? In medieval Latin, its “material” meaning is still the physical bowing or bending of one’s head or body (as in Scripture) or perhaps of a tree (as in Roman law). In my view, the classical sense of *inclinatio* as a leaning toward a particular opinion fits Barfield’s second stage: a concomitant, metaphorical sense of a mental leaning (or, in Christian usage, submission or abasement) comes about, even though the old *ratio propria* of corporeal leaning remains dominant.

As the word *inclinatio* is extended into the “immaterial” realm through the usage of scholastic philosophy, it does not appear that it has quite reached the fourth stage, in which it would “exclusively” (Barfield’s description) refer to its new proper sense: “disposition.” It does not do so, because the original sense of *inclinatio* as “bending” is still in currency, as St. Thomas’s use of the term in these older senses in several texts shows. That leaves the third stage: *inclinatio* has taken on a substituted meaning (disposition), but the original meanings have “not quite vanished.”¹¹⁴

Has, then, the word *inclinatio* “achieved” a new literal sense according to Barfield’s analysis? Perhaps it has not done so exclusively, in view of the survival of the older senses. But in St. Thomas’s understanding, it is not necessary that the original sense of the word have vanished for the new sense to become proper according to a different *ratio*. That is, according to the analogy of proper proportionality, a word can be properly analogous to

older, surviving, senses of the word—through a ratio communis. This is precisely what has happened in the case of the word lux. As Ralph McInerny explains:

The term is first assigned to signify a notion expressing something in the sensible order, that which makes bodies visible, and this is its ratio propria. Given this meaning, only those things are signified by the term which save this ratio propria. Used of anything else, it is used metaphorically and supposes improperly. However, if usage indicates that the meaning of the name has been extended, we can recognize a ratio communis of the name. This is what Augustine feels has happened with ‘light.’ If we consider the things which fall under the common signification of the term, the spiritual principle of manifestation, e.g. the agent intellect, is really or ontologically more perfect than the sun. . . . [A]ccording to the order of the imposition of the name, the sun is most properly signified by the term.¹¹⁵

Like lux, which retains both its old and new meanings, inclinatio is no longer a univocal term which has only the ratio propria of physical bending or leaning. Inclinatio now also properly signifies a ratio communis, which is the disposition of a mover in virtue of which the moved thing moves, as noted above. To use McInerny’s words, “[t]hanks to their ratio communis,” the proper and extended meanings of inclin-termes have become analogous.¹¹⁶

For purposes of this study, it is important to grasp that “inclination” is properly predicated of “nature” in this analogous way. As I discuss in Chapter VII, “disposition,” as a subdivision of the category of relation, can be predicated of many things, including minds, appetites, habits, and marble columns. Likewise, nature has its own dispositions, which are what St. Thomas calls “natural inclination” or, often in exactly the same sense, “natural appetite.”¹¹⁷

An illustration of natural inclination in its newly proper, “achieved literal” sense is in a text in which St. Thomas discusses the passions of the soul. In this text, ST I-II, q. 37, a. 2, St. Thomas turns the physical-figurative dichotomy on its head. The human passions are

¹¹⁵ Ralph McInerny, Logic of Analogy, 149.
¹¹⁶ McInerny, Logic of Analogy, 149-50.
¹¹⁷ In section D below I discuss why Thomas does not generally use the term dispositio naturalis in place of inclinatio naturalis in the context of natural law, despite his understanding that an inclinatio is a dispositio. On the equivalence of natural inclination and natural appetite, see section D below and Chapter VI.
metaphorically similar to the natural inclinations of inanimate bodies, not the other way around. That is to say, instead of imposing the image of a human passion on dumb nature, he shows that the passions are the human analog to natural inclination:

The effects of the soul’s passions are sometimes named metaphorically [metaphorice], from a likeness [similitudo] to sensible bodies: for the reason that the movements of the animal appetite are like the inclinations of the natural appetite. And in this way fervor is ascribed to love, expansion to pleasure, and depression to sorrow. For a man is said to be depressed, through being hindered in his own movement by some weight.  

Although the sensus primus impositus of inclinatio is the classical sense of human bowing or leaning, St. Thomas seems to assume in this text that the extended sense of inclinatio as a natural tendency is a true inclination, not a metaphor or a “projected image” of inclination.

c. What is the problem with saying that “inclination” is attributed to “nature” only metaphorically?

Why does it matter whether the name inclinatio naturalis is said of nature “only” metaphorically? Is it, indeed, a devaluation or derogation to say that something is a “natural inclination” only metaphorically? After all, when St. Thomas says that motus is said of the mind “not at all except metaphorically” (nihil nisi metaphorice), he is not saying that the mind or its operations are somehow fictional.  

When Deferrari, in accord with

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118 ST I-II, q. 37, a. 2 [Leon. 6.254]: “effectus passionum animae quandoque metaphorice nominantur, secundum similitudinem sensibilium corporum, eo quod motus appetitus animalis sunt similes inclinationibus appetitus naturalis. Et per hunc modum fervor attribuitur amori, dilatatio delectationi, et aggravatio tristitiae. Dicitur enim homo aggravari, ex eo quod aliquo pondere impeditur a proprio motu.”

119 In I De anima, lect. 10, n. 15 [Leon. 45/1.50:201-2]. In my view, as I explain in the Introduction, Thomas may be reluctant to extend the meaning of motus beyond Aristotle’s authoritative understanding of motion in terms of local motion and qualitative alteration. Ralph McInerny view this text as “startling” and problematic: “the thing named metaphorically, we want to say, is not named or denominated from the res significata of the name in question although it is referred to what is denominated from it: the thing which is spoken of metaphorically is not named properly because it does not fall under the range of the principal signification of the term in question.” McInerny, Studies in Analogy, 79. McInerny then turns to lux, “a case where, from different points of view, we can say either that a thing is being spoken of either metaphorically (improprie) or analogically (proprie).” Ibid.
lexicographical convention, relegates all extended senses of inclin-terms to the “figurative” classification, what harm is done?  

The harm lies not with Deferrari or dictionary convention as such. The convention is symptomatic of a larger problem. This lumping together of all “figurative” (modern sense) meanings of inclin-terms, which account for the vast majority of St. Thomas’s uses of those terms, arguably obscures the character of the terms as bearers of philosophical truth. The real issue is not in the order of predication—that is, of the logical objects of the mind, such as distinctions between analogy and metaphor, or between ratio propria and ratio communis—but instead in the order of being. The important issue is not so much the mode of signification, but the “thing signified” (res significata). As McInerny explains regarding lux, 

If lux has only a ratio propria, it is used metaphorically of whatever does not verify that notion. However, if we attend to the res significata, the denominating form, manifestation, it is possible to form a ratio communis: “whatever causes manifestation” and any mode of manifestation can then be named properly by the term lux.  

We must ask, then, “What res, for St. Thomas, does the term inclinatio signify?” As we have seen, the “common notion” (ratio communis) of NI-terms is disposition, which is common to a variety of real beings. More importantly, what res does the term inclinatio naturalis signify? It signifies, for St. Thomas, a real disposition of nature. Inclinatio no longer has the predominant meaning of bending or bowing; instead it has a meaning that is

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120 One sense of inclinare, directly derivative of a physical sense of the terms, can be purely figurative. “To bow the head” (inclinare caput) can be a metaphor for obedience to, or being subject to, a person; the head need not actually be inclined. R. J. Deferrari, Lexicon, s.v. “inclinare”; Lect. super Ioann., cap. 19, lect. 5: “inclinatio capitis obedientiam designat.” Similarly, in English, to “give the nod” or “tip one’s hat” does not necessarily require a physical nod or doffing of the hat.  
121 McInerny, Studies in Analogy, 79.  
122 The word “being” is predicated analogously (by analogy of proper proportionality) of both substances and properties of substances. As explained in Chapter VII, a disposition is a sub-species of relation, which is a property.
metaphysical; it can apply to a wide range of things and, in the case of *inclinatio naturalis*, a wide range of natures.

But if *inclinatio naturalis* is understood in the same sense as the English term “natural inclination,” we quickly run into two problems. As discussed in section C below, the English term “inclination” has itself undergone a major semantic shift. The English term has mostly, but not entirely, shed the meaning it once shared with classical Latin, that is, its “stage one” meaning in Barfield schema: bending or bowing.\(^{123}\) But in the case of English, rather than ascending towards a scholastic, metaphysical sense of inclination as disposition, the modern English sense of “inclination” has side-stepped into a pale, truncated vestige of the scholastic sense. “Inclination” now chiefly means the subjective preference or proclivity of an individual human being.\(^{124}\) Any teleology still associated with such inclination is imagined and imparted to it by the subject person, whose purposes are the only teloi left in the world. This world is one in which, as Scott Buchanan writes, “[t]he reflective reason of man is clearly purposive, but the rest of nature sleeps in its mechanical and mathematical order.”\(^{125}\)

In this sense of “inclination,” any real inclining is of, and by, the subject person, who alone can deliberately act. Any attribution of “inclination” or “inclining” to nature prior to the exercise of human agency is necessarily metaphorical because the *ratio propria* of inclination can only be found in the human analogue. Only a human being can engage in the act of inclining in the sense of inclining towards an end. In modern English, to say, “the rat

\(^{123}\) As a historical matter, the word “inclination” in its first usage in English (Chaucer) is used in the sense of a disposition caused by the stars, a sense that is closer to scholastic usage than to the original Latin “material” sense. See section C below.

\(^{124}\) See section C below.

\(^{125}\) Scott Buchanan, *So Reason Can Rule*, 303.
has an inclination to find its food in the maze,” or “the apple has an inclination to fall on
Newton’s head,” would be to use a metaphor of a specific type: “anthropomorphism.”

Deferrari defines *inclinatio* in the sense relevant to natural inclination as follows, “of
things inanimate, *the natural tendency* or *affinity of inorganic substances*, which impel them
towards what is suitable to their nature.” Deferrari relegates this definition the “figurative”
realm which, as explained in the Introduction, in English dictionaries includes such things as
the “smiling valley” or the “attacking virus.” The problem with this pan-figurative
designation is that the inclining of nature, for St. Thomas, is *not* a poetic image or a
convenient “human-think” shorthand to explain a non-teleological process of “biology” (if
biology includes viruses at all). We understand that the smiling sun is not “really” smiling
and the virus is not “deliberately” attacking. We merely impose or “project” our familiar
image of smiling and attacking on these dumb, non-purposive, material objects. By contrast,
when St. Thomas says “nature inclines” (*natura inclinat*) he means what he says. The *res
significata* is not according to the *sensus primus impositus* but according to inclination in the
abstract sense, which signifies, as will be further explained in subsequent chapters, a
disposition of a thing that follows upon the thing’s nature and that precedes the thing’s
natural motion towards its determinate end. Natural inclination is not an imaginative
shorthand for “what is really going on,” which can only be properly accounted for in terms
of, say, Newtonian mechanism or Darwinian differential reproductive “success.” For St.

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126 More specifically, it would be anthropomorphism of the man-to-nature variety. In its widest
significance, “anthropomorphism” means the attribution of something that is univocally said of human beings to
a non-human being. The term often means the attribution of human traits to God, such as being angry or having
ears, thus “placing the nature of the first cause on the same plane as our own,” Joseph Owens, *Elementary
Christian Metaphysics*, 93. As I use the term in this dissertation, it means instead the attribution of human
powers to nature, as I explain in Chapters III, VI, and VII.

127 Deferrari, s.v. “inclinatio” (italics in original).
Thomas, natural inclination is, instead, true inclination. “Inclination” is not predicated of “nature” (e.g., of a stone to move downwards) in the same way that “smile” is predicated of “valley” or “being in the dog house” of the chastised husband.

Much has been written about the elimination of natural teleology in modern philosophy. My purpose here is not to recapitulate that history, but to apply a basic understanding of the shift in thinking about nature to the exegetical problem of reading St. Thomas’s inclinatio naturalis. We inhabit a world in which it is assumed that nature in Aristotle’s sense has been destroyed and, there being no ends to incline towards, the inclination of nature is not really an inclination (i.e., not really the subjective preferences of a thinking being) but only looks like an inclination. As English-speaking moderns, it is very difficult for us to see, or say, that natural inclination is “inclining” in anything other than a “figurative” sense.

By “figurative” here, with respect to nature, I mean metaphorical in the way that a valley is said to smile when everyone knows that valleys are not conscious or happy, do not have lips, and lack whatever else is really required for smiling. In modern terms, to the scientifically educated man, the seemingly goal-directed “behavior” of non-human things is no more real than the apparent smile of the valley.128

Another way of describing this problem is in terms of the notion of “epiphenomenon.” It may “look like” an apple “strives” to drop straight down upon Isaac’s head, or that the saber-tooth tiger’s teeth are “designed” to pierce the thick hides of woolly mammoths, or that the dog has an “appetite” for its bowl of food. But modern science, in the view of some

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philosophers, is said to teach that these phenomena are not real in a fundamental way. What “we see” in our common experience deceives us. We see only the “epiphenomena,” which constitute a distorting gloss over the true, underlying reality: matter in “motion” (that is, end-less motion, not motion in Aristotle’s sense). The apple is a heavy body moving according to the “laws” (promulgated by the philosopher) of gravity and rectilinear motion; the tiger’s teeth are adaptations by natural “selection”; animal appetite is our name for certain chemical and mechanical processes; human beings are mostly water and a few dollars worth of chemicals, whose DNA is barely distinguishable from that of the chimpanzee; and, to add one last clichéd example, the table-top is not solid, but is instead comprised almost entirely of the empty space between tiny electrons whirring in their orbits.

In the same way, according to this view of nature, “natural inclination” is not a proper name signifying a real inclination, but is instead only a metaphor to describe the epiphenomena that obscure the more basic motions of atoms in a void. If this way of thinking is extended to human nature and human action, “behavior” that appears to be deliberate, purposive action is in reality nothing but the “smoke (epiphenomena) rolling off the machine (the really real, underlying mechanism).”

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129 See, e.g., Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, pt. 4, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1980), 17: “since our senses sometimes deceive us, I decided to suppose that nothing was exactly as our senses would have us imagine.” For an insightful discussion by an evolutionary biologist of whether the phenomena of biology can be reduced to principles physics or chemistry, see Ernst Mayr, *Towards a New Philosophy of Biology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 8-23.


131 I credit this metaphor to Michael D. Aeschliman, who used it in a lecture on scientism and literature at the University of Virginia in 1989.
For modern readers of St. Thomas, there is a nearly irresistible urge or drive, as it were, to interpret “natural inclination” as a biological “urge” or “drive.” Mark Murphy, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Pamela Hall have recognized the importance of seeing St. Thomas’s *inclinatio* as a “directedness” towards determinate ends, as opposed to the inchoate urge that the English term “natural inclination” suggests.\(^ {132}\) Murphy expressly contrasts St. Thomas’s teleological sense of *inclinatio* from the modern sense used by John Finnis, for whom inclination “is paradigmatically something felt, a sort of urge.”\(^ {133}\) Given the philosophically neutered sense of the term in dictionaries and common usage, there is no reason to expect the modern reader to read it in a robustly teleological way and, if the term did admit of such a reading, one worries that it would smack of a crude anthropomorphism. But it is indispensable for the scholar of St. Thomas’s natural law to accept his NI-language at face value: nature inclines and it does so for a determinate end; it does not merely seem to do so.

St. Thomas’s usage of *inclin*-terms reflects his realist philosophy. Words signify reality as it is, not merely as it appears. St. Thomas’s application of the term *inclinare* to nature does not signify a mere appearance of purposive inclining, masking the mechanical motion of bodies. Recourse to the forlorn “as-if teleology” of a Kant or Darwin is unnecessary because the inclination is real. Rather, any inclination of nature presupposes an intrinsic order toward the observed end towards which the thing inclines. Where there is a determinate end, even in nature, there is intention. Thus, all the motions of nature—and,


\(^{133}\) Murphy, *Practical Rationality*, 10.
accordingly, all the inclinations underlying such motions—are, in an inescapably real sense, intentional. St. Thomas makes this point bluntly in one of his earliest works: “It is . . . possible for a natural agent to intend an end without deliberation and this intending is nothing other than having a natural inclination towards something.” As explained in Chapter VII, this natural intentionality, which underlies the notion of inclination-as-disposition within an order of movers, is the teleological core of St. Thomas’s notion of natural inclination.

2. Extrinsic Inclining and Natural Inclination

How are the extrinsic-transitive senses of inclin- relevant to inclinatio naturalis? In sum, the natural inclination of a thing is not only its (intrinsic) self-inclination, but also God’s (extrinsic) inclining of that thing. It is the determinate directedness of a nature towards its natural end as preconceived by the one who gives the thing its inclination in the first place, namely God. Thus, natural things “have a natural desire without knowledge, as being directed [inclinata] to their ends by a higher intelligence.” The nature is, at the same time, directed from within. Nature inclines towards natural ends. The natural thing inclines towards its natural place, operation, or end. A stone, for example, truly inclines towards—indeed, strives (appetit) toward—its natural place below.

God gives the thing its inclination and, thereby, inclines that thing. As St. Thomas writes, “to whomever God gives an inclination he also gives certain forms which are the principles of action and motion to the things God inclines him to, just as he gives lightness to

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134 De princ. nat., cap. 3 [Leon. 43.42:38-41]: “possibile est agens naturale sine deliberatione intendere finem: et hoc intendere nihil aliud erat quam habere naturalem inclinationem ad aliquid.”
135 ST I, q. 6, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 4.66]: “Quaedam . . . appetitum naturalem habent absque cognitione, utpote inclinata ad suos fines ab alio superiori cognoscente.”
136 E.g., SCG II, cap. 55, n. 13: “ex sola inclinatione naturalium principiorum, quae naturalis appetitus in quibusdam dicitur: sicut grave appetit esse deorsum.”
fire so that it can quickly and easily leap upward."\textsuperscript{137} The inclination is an *impressio* from God: “every inclination of anything, whether natural or voluntary, is nothing but a kind of impression from the first mover; as the inclination of the arrow towards a fixed point is nothing but an impulse received from the archer.”\textsuperscript{138} One could conclude that the impression and the inclination are entirely separate. The impression is entirely from without, while the inclination, though arising from the *impressio*, begins within the thing. The inclination takes up, as it were, where the impression leaves off. Yet in St. Thomas’s usage, the *inclin-*term itself, even with respect to natural inclination, has both extrinsic and intrinsic notes:

He who gave heaviness to the stone inclined [*inclinavit*] it to be borne downward naturally. In this way the one who begets them is the mover in regard to heavy and light things . . . . It is after this fashion that all natural things are inclined [*inclinata*] to what is suitable for them, having within themselves some principle of their inclination [*inclinationis*] in virtue of which that inclination [*inclinatio*] is natural, so that in a way they go themselves and are not merely led to their due ends.\textsuperscript{139}

Thus God, as creator of the nature, “inclines” the stone to move downward. The stone, in turn, “is inclined.” The stone’s “inclination,” in turn, is its “being inclined” by the Creator.

St. Thomas expressly compares natural inclination to the human lawgiver’s command or legislation. For example, he compares the precept of the *paterfamilias* with natural inclination:

\begin{quote}
De virt. card., a. 2 [Marietti 819]: “Deus autem ad quaecumque dat inclinationem, dat etiam formas aliquas, quae sunt principia operationum et motuum, ad quos res inclinatur a Deo; sicut igni dat levitatem, per quam prompte et facilius sursum tendit; unde, ut dicitur Sap. VIII, 1, *disponit omnia suaviter.*”


\textsuperscript{139} De ver., q. 22, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.613:164-74]: “ille qui dedit lapidi gravitatem, inclinavit ipsum ad hoc quod deorsum naturaliter ferretur; per quem modum generans est motor in gravibus et levibus . . . . Et per hunc modum omnes res naturales, in ea quae eis conveniunt, sunt inclinata, habentia in seipsis aliquod inclinationis principium, ratione cuius eorum inclinationio naturalis est, ita ut quodammodo ipsa vadant, et non solum ducantur in fines debitos.”
\end{quote}
And just as [sicut] the order of the family is imposed by the law and precept of the head of the family, who is the principle of each of the things which are ordered in the household, with a view to carrying out the activities which pertain to the order of the household, so [ita] the nature of physical things is the principle by which each of them carries out the activity proper to it in the order of the universe. For just as any member of the household is inclined to act through the precept of the head of the family, so any natural being is inclined by its own nature. Now the nature of each thing is a kind of inclination implanted in it by the first mover, who directs it to its proper end . . . .

Inclination is like precept—each involves a bending of the subject. All things participate in the eternal law inasmuch as “from His impression they have inclinations towards their proper acts and ends.” Likewise it is through the natural law—understood as man’s participation in the eternal law—that man “has a natural inclination to [his] due act and end.”

In another text, St. Thomas goes so far as to say that the natural inclination is God’s law for the creature, which is to say, natural law:

the law of God is to any dependent creature its natural inclination to doing that which befits it according to nature . . . . But the ultimate of every end is the divine goodness, to which, as an end, all particular ends are ordained, toward which things are naturally inclined. Thus,

140 Emphasis added. In XII Meta., lect. 12, n. 2634 [Marietti 741] “Sicut autem imponitur in familia ordo per legem et praeceptum patrisfamilias, qui est principium unicuique ordinatorum in domo, exequendi ea quae pertinunt ad ordinem domus, ita natura in rebus naturalibus est principium exequendi unicuique id quod competit sibi de ordine universi. Sicuti enim qui est in domo per praeceptum patrisfamilias ad aliquid inclinatur, ita aliqua res naturalis per naturam propria. Et ipsa natura uniuscuiusque est quaedam inclinatio indita ei a primo movente, ordinans ipsam in debito finem.” Thomas’s use of the “sicut . . . ita” construction suggest an analogy of some sort: a subject for a separate study. Cf. In Hebr., cap. 13, lect. 3, nn. 769-70 [Marietti, 2.505] (linking natural inclination with God’s inclining of the king’s heart).

141 Indeed praeceptum and inclinatio once had a semantic similarity. In classical Latin, praeceps can mean sinking, declining, steep (as in precipitous), just as inclinatio can mean a sinking, declining, or slope. See Lewis & Short, s.v. “praecipere” and “inclinatio.” St. Thomas also says that imperium implies inclination. De ver., q. 22, a. 12, ad 4 [Leon 22/3.642:93-95]: “imperium est et voluntatis et rationis quantum ad diversa; voluntatis quidem secundum quod imperium inclinationem quamdam importat; rationis vero, secundum quod haec inclinatio distribuitur et ordinatur ut exequenda per hunc vel per illum.”

142ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154]: “omnia participant aliquiliter legem aeternam, inquantum scilicet ex impressione eius habent inclinationes in proprios actus et fines. Inter cetera autem rationalis creatura excellentiori quodam modo divinae providentiae subiacet, inquantum et ipsa fit providentiae particeps, sibi ipsi et aliis providens. Unde et in ipsa participatur ratio aeterna, per quam habet naturalem inclinationem addebitum actum et finem. Et talis participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura lex naturalis dicitur.” Thomas also likens God’s command to human legislation: as man “imprints” a certain interior principle of human acts on his subjects by proclamation, so God “commands the whole of nature” by imprinting on it the principles of it proper acts. ST I-II, q. 93 a. 5 [Leon. 7.166]: “Sicut autem homo imprimit, denuntiando, quoddam interius principium actuam homini sibi subiecto, ita etiam Deus imprimit toti naturae principia propriorum actuam. Et ideo per hunc modum dicitur Deus praecepere toti naturae; secundum illud Psalmi CXLVIII, praeceptum posuit, et non praeeritib. Et per hanc etiam rationem omnes motus et actiones totius naturae legi aeternae subduntur.”

143 Ibid.
therefore, the natural inclinations themselves of things toward their proper ends, which we say to be natural laws are . . . consonant with natural appetite . . . by which the divine goodness is loved.\footnote{In De div. nom., cap. 10, lect. 1, n. 857 [Marietti 321]: “lex enim Dei est cuilibet creaturae infixa naturalis inclinatio ipsius ad agendum id quod convenit ei secundum naturam. . . Ultimus autem omnium finis est bonitas divina, ad quam sicut ad finem ordinatur omnes praevis et particulares fines in quos res naturaliter inclinantur. Sic igitur ipsae naturales inclinationes rerum in proprios fines, quas dicimus esse naturales leges, sunt . . . consoni naturali appetitui . . . quo divina bonitas amat.”}

The concern of this investigation is not \textit{lex} as such.\footnote{ST I, q. 6, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 4.66]: “Quaedam . . . appetitum naturalem habent absque cognitione, utpote inclinata ad suos fines ab alio superiori cognoscente.”} Rather, it is to show that natural inclination is not merely intrinsic, but presupposes, and \textit{is}, a certain divine direction—a “being directed” by God. Thus, natural things “have a natural desire without knowledge, as being directed \textit{inclinata} to their ends by a higher intelligence.”\footnote{De ver., q. 22, a. 4 [Leon. 22/3.620:59-62]: “Hoc autem ad divinam dignitatem pertinet ut omnia moveat et inclinet et dirigat, ipse a nullo alio motus vel inclinatus aut directus.”} The extrinsic-transitive sense of natural inclination is especially clear in several texts in which St. Thomas speaks of God inclining. For example, he writes, “Now it belongs to the divine excellence to move and incline and direct all things while not being moved, inclined, or directed by any other.”\footnote{ST I, q. 19, a. 4 [Leon. 4.237]: “inclinatio eius ad agendum quod intellectu concepsum est, pertinet ad voluntatem. Voluntas igitur Dei est causa rerum.”} Similarly, St. Thomas refers to “his inclination” in reference to God’s will as the cause of all things.\footnote{In any event, commanding is an act of reason, not arbitrary will. ST I-II, q. 90, a. 1, s.c. [Leon. 7.149]: “ad legem pertinet praeicipere et prohibere. Sed imperare est rationis . . . Ergo lex est aliquid rationis.” Cf. ST I-II q. 17, a. 1. The notion of natural inclination in divine governance is further discussed in Chapter VII.}

To link \textit{inclinatio} with an extrinsic law or command is not to reduce the natural law to divine will or deny the cognitive element of natural law.\footnote{In any event, commanding is an act of reason, not arbitrary will. ST I-II, q. 90, a. 1, s.c. [Leon. 7.149]: “ad legem pertinet praeicipere et prohibere. Sed imperare est rationis . . . Ergo lex est aliquid rationis.” Cf. ST I-II q. 17, a. 1. The notion of natural inclination in divine governance is further discussed in Chapter VII.} Nor is it to reduce natural inclination to a crude occasionalism. Rather, the important lesson in this lexicological
excursion is that, for St. Thomas, natural inclination is not simply an intrinsic urge or other leaning from within. Natural inclination is just as much and, in a way, first and foremost, an extrinsic inclining of a thing by God through nature.

3. NI-Terms and Natural Law: Primary (Formal) and Secondary (Material) Senses

To determine what St. Thomas means by *inclinatio naturalis* in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 and his natural law texts in general, it is important to be alert that he does not always use NI-terms in precisely the same way. He almost always uses NI-terms in one of two senses. The first sense is natural inclination where nature is understood as form. This is the natural inclination common to all members of a species. In the case of human nature, it is the nature of all men. This is the primary and proper sense of *inclinatio naturalis* in the context of natural law. The threefold schema of human inclinations in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 is not a description of the inclinations of a few men, or most men, but rather all men. The secondary sense of *inclinatio naturalis* is that in which the *natura* at issue is understood as a material principle: the singular bodily temperament or *complexio* an individual has from birth, as will be explained in Chapter III. Individual human beings have a wide range of these proclivities, e.g., towards particular virtues or vices. But these natural inclinations, though innate and, in the material sense, truly natural, are *not* the natural inclinations described in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2. Both of these senses of NI-terms are found throughout the corpus at all stages of St. Thomas’s career.

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150 Examples of unusual senses of natural inclination that do not fit either the primary or secondary senses discussed here are (1) the natural inclination of injustice, where “injustice” is taken to be a nature, *In VII Ethic.*, lect. 6, n. 19 [Leon. 47/2.407:236-37] (“habitus iniustitiae secundum propriam naturam habet inclinationem ad malum”); and (2) the natural inclination of matter to receive form, e.g., *In IV Sent.*, d. 17, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 2; *In De div. nom.*, cap. 4, lect. 2, n. 298 [Marietti 97]; *ST* I, q. 59, a. 2 [Leon. 5.93]; and *ST* I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116].

151 But Thomas does use NI-language in this secondary, bodily sense in certain natural law contexts, especially in the *Commentary on the Ethics*. See, e.g., *In IV Ethic.*, lect. 10, n. 24 [Leon. 47/2.236:251-8] (natural inclination of man as individual to a passion, e.g., bashfulness or magnanimity). See Chapter III for discussion of *natura individualis*. 
It is important to keep the distinction between primary and secondary senses in mind for this reason. If St. Thomas’s NI-terms in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 meant any natural inclination in any possible sense of nature—individual or specific, good or evil—then his natural law teaching would be vulnerable to several characteristically modern slanders: that nature, being “red in tooth and claw,” is a poor teacher of morals; that taking natural inclination as moral guide is no different from heeding Hume’s injunction that reason should be a slave of the passions; that nature can be no law for all men because it varies from individual to individual; that the order of the inclinations is an irrelevant metaphysical appendage to the real business of natural law, which is practical reasoning; and so forth.152 These accusations are based on a kernel of truth, for St. Thomas sometimes uses NI-terms in the problematic sense of an individual’s disposition to evil, as will be explained in Chapter V. Yet his teleological understanding of nature as a principle of motion towards determinate goods precludes a natural inclination to evil in the primary sense of NI-terms proper to natural law.

C. Dangerous Senses of “Inclination” and “Incline” in English

Having investigated the range and depth of inclin-language in St. Thomas’s lexicon, it is useful to distinguish what he means by inclinatio and inclinare from the predominant senses of the English cognate words “inclination” and “incline.”153

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152 The accusations are present in Mill in some form and recycled by Nielsen, Finnis, and many others. See J. S. Mill, On Nature (nature is immoral); Kai Nielsen, “An Examination of the Thomistic Theory of Natural Moral Law,” Natural Law Forum 4 (1959): 44-71 (Hume’s slavery to passions); Finnis, Natural Law and Natural Rights, 36 (irrelevant appendage to natural law theory as a study of practical reasoning).

153 For words to be “cognates” of each other does not require that they have the same meaning. See Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Inc., 2002), s.v. “cognate,” “of a word or morpheme: related by descent from the same root … in [an] ancestral language. The term “false cognates,” which describes two words that appear similarly, but are not really from a common root (e.g., Latin jam, “at this very time,” and English “jam,” “fruit preserve”), is
inclinatio as “inclination” is fraught with danger. Modern readers typically equate “natural inclination” with the subjective proclivity of an individual person or with the “blind instinct” or “irrational urge” of an animal. By doing so, they obscure the true meaning of the term as St. Thomas uses it in the context of natural law.

1. “Inclination” as Subjective Disposition

Apart from certain physical or geometrical meanings of the term, “inclination” in English is predominantly understood in the sense of a whim or individual proclivity or disposition, whether innate or acquired, of an individual human being or a people. The OED’s examples of this subjective sense include, “I havn’t [sic] time nor inclination for much letter-writing” and “The Frank warriors . . . showed an inclination of executing at once the sentence.” There is a certain ad hoc teleology in this sense of inclination, but the telos is not natural in the sense proper to the specific form of human kind, but instead varies from one particular individual or group to another. Hobbes uses the term in this individualist

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154 The entry for “inclination” in the American Heritage Dictionary illustrates the range of senses grouping: “1. A bend or tlt. 2.a. A slant . . . b. An incline; slope. 3. A tendency or disposition toward something.” American Heritage Dictionary, 3rd ed. (New York: Dell Publishing, 1994). The OED adds the sense of grammatical enclisis, a “throwing” of an accent on an adjacent word or syllable (analogous to leaning). The physical-spatial meanings track classical usage, including the sense of bowing out of courtesy. E.g., one can show respect “by the most humble inclination of the body.” Walter Scott, Quentin Durward (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1944), 122. In the sense of individual disposition, Webster’s defines “inclination” as: “a particular disposition of mind or character: propensity, bent . . . usu: favorable disposition esp. toward a particular thing, activity, or end: liking, desire . . .” Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Inc., 2002). E.g., “Bid him Report the feature of Octauia: her yeares, Her inclination, let him not leaue out The colour of her haire.” Shakespeare Ant. & Cl. (1606) 2.113 (quoted in OED); and “[Durward] had a strong passion for the chase, one of the few inclinations which he indulged,” Scott, Quentin Durward, 126.

155 OED, s.v. “inclination.”

156 Alan White argues “inclination” lacks even the subjective finality of an individual’s motive or purpose. If a person “has an inclination” (or “is inclined”) to do something, this means “either he (1) feels like doing it; or (2) he commonly does it.” The first is an impulse, the second a tendency or trait, White explains. Both are distinct from “motive” (the reason for acting). Alan R. White, “Inclination,” Analysis 21 (Dec. 1960): 40-42.
sense when he says that “good and evil are names given to things to signify the inclination or aversion of them, by whom they were given.” For St. Thomas, these sorts of inclinations are inclinations of bodily temperament, habit, or custom—not natural inclinations in the sense proper to natural law, i.e., inclinations common to the human species.

2. “Natural Inclination” Denatured

In modern English dictionaries, the few English senses that most closely correspond to St. Thomas’s use of inclination as characteristic of a specific nature are tagged as “rare,” “obsolete,” or, at best, “figurative.” As we saw in the Introduction, modern lexicographers draw a sharp distinction between literal and figurative (or “tropological”) senses of words, and invariably relegate analogical senses of “incline” and “inclination” to the figurative column. While a distinction between literal and non-literal or “extended” senses might be valid up to a point, it is imperative to recall that St. Thomas’s philosophical senses of inclination terms are properly analogous, not metaphorical. They signify real tending. St. Thomas, as explained above, always uses the term inclinatio in an analogical and teleological sense, that is, nested within the context of a real agent acting for a pre-conceived end. The teleology of

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157 Thomas Hobbes De cive 111.31.
158 See Chapter III for discussion of natura understood as the bodily nature of an individual, and the corresponding (secondary) sense of inclinatio naturae.
159 The OED, for example, includes inclination in the sense of “[g]eneral or permanent mental tendency; natural disposition; nature, character. Obs. E.g., “He hath giuen to all creatures a certayne inclination and nature.” 1577 tr. Bullinger’s Decades, 2.6. The OED also defines inclination as “A tendency, disposition, or propensity to some physical condition or quality; formerly, the general character or nature (of a thing): now only as fig.” E.g., “Men iudge by the complexion of the Skie The state and inclination of the day.” 1593 Shakes. Rich. II, 3.2.195.
inclinatio is not always natural, but all inclinations involve real agency, real motion, and a real, which is to say, pre-conceived, end.\textsuperscript{160}

3. Predominantly Intrinsic Sense of “Inclination” and “Incline”

Why do modern, English-speaking readers so easily miss the extrinsic-transitive, command-related sense of \textit{inclinatio}? In St. Thomas’s terms, how has the \textit{usus loquentius} been twisted so that the notion of “inclination” no longer entails an “incliner” who “inclines” the thing that “is inclined” within an order of moved movers? In the same way that the teleological senses of the English words “inclination” and “incline” have atrophied into mere metaphor, the transitive senses of “inclining”—that of one agent or thing inclining another agent or thing—have fallen into disuse.

Owen Barfield describes a process of “internalization” in modern English by which “the shifting of the center of gravity of consciousness from the cosmos around him into the personal human being himself.”\textsuperscript{161} He notes that words such as “disposition,” “inspiration,” and “instinct” have “lost their old literal meaning[s]” and acquired “modern and metaphorical” meanings instead.\textsuperscript{162} In my view, the terms “incline” and “inclination” are further examples of the process of “internalization” described by Owen Barfield inasmuch as an inclination is now regarded as “something arising from within the human being rather than something instilled from without.”\textsuperscript{163}

\textsuperscript{160} He rarely uses the term in what could be taken as an abstractly geometrical sense (see \textit{In II De caelo}, lect. 26, n. 6) and never uses it in the sense of a blind or random urge (the “teleonomic” propensity of nature in a Darwinian sense).
\textsuperscript{161} Barfield, \textit{History in English Words}, 171.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 208. E.g., “we speak of a man’s ‘disposition’ without at all knowing that the reference is to astrology.” Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 208.
The older, extrinsic-transitive senses of incline in English have mostly faded. Today, if someone says, “I am inclined to believe . . .” the emphasis is on the subject inclining, not on the thing that inclines him. There is nothing wrong with the use of the passive voice (“am inclined,” *inclinatus est*), but the modern English speaker notices only the patient, not the agent that inclines the inclined one to be inclined.

For St. Thomas, however, natural inclination is not a blind intrinsicism, because every inclination presupposes an intention of an exterior mover. If the shallower, merely intrinsic or figurative contemporary meanings of inclination are substituted for St. Thomas’s far richer (but now “obsolete”) meaning, the meaning of *inclinatio naturalis* in the context of natural law is obscured.

4. Distorted Senses of “Natural Inclination” in Modern Philosophy

The fact that Kant’s term *Neigung* is usually translated as “inclination” or “natural inclination” illustrates the narrowness of the modern usage. For Kant, a given inclination is not the disposition of a thing to move towards the realization of its natural end, or to any

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164 According to the *OED*, the term “inclination” appears in English as early as Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer uses the term in reference to the Wife of Bath’s sinful tendency: “Allas, allas, that evere love was synne! / I folwed ay myn *inclinacioun* / By vertu of my *constellacioun* . . . .” Chaucer, *Cant. Tales* ch. 30. James Franklin includes “inclination” in a list of abstract terms Chaucer borrowed directly from scholastic Latin. Franklin, “Mental Furniture,” 181. In Chaucer’s usage here, the inclination is not merely a brute, subjective fact, but is rather a determinate tendency imparted by celestial movers (her *constellacioun*). This celestial context is obscured in later usage.

165 In the *OED*, although an extrinsic-transitive sense remains—“To bend (the mind, heart, will, etc.) towards some course or action; to give a mental leaning or tendency to (a person); to dispose”—the examples given illustrate the trend towards internalization that Barfield describes. Milton’s line (1659), “Such advice as God should incline him . . . to propound” (quoted in *OED*, s.v. “incline”), is intelligible today, but archaic.

166 In the case of natural inclination in particular, natural things “tendunt . . . in finem sicut directa in finem a substantia intelligente, per modum quo sagitta tendit ad signum directa a sagittante.” *SCG* III, cap. 24, n. 4 [Leon, 14.62].

determinate end. Kant instead reduces “inclination” to “the dependence of the faculty of desire on sensations.” As Mark Murphy warns, “This is not what Aquinas means by inclinatio.” In St. Thomas’s terms, because Kantian inclinations are non-teleological, they are, properly speaking, neither natural nor inclinations at all.

Hume and Mill, while having a very different understanding of ethics, share Kant’s rejection of natural teleology with respect to human natural inclinations. Hume, for example, regards human natural inclination as intrinsically selfish and conceives of such inclinations in mechanical terms. Mill’s understanding of natural inclination turns on his narrow conception of nature as “things as they would be, apart from human intervention.” For this reason, on Mill’s account, natural inclination can provide no moral compass.

D. Synonyms and Overlapping Terms

St. Thomas seems to use numerous terms as synonyms for inclin-terms. Most prominently, he expressly equates appetitus naturalis with inclinatio naturalis in numerous texts (as discussed below and in Chapter VI). Other terms he uses as synonyms of inclinatio

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168 Kant makes no distinction between natural inclinations and evil desires. Inclinations are not intrinsically ordered to any specific goods, but only to pleasure. What matters is “how much and how great is the pleasure which [these activities] will afford him over the longest time.” Kant, CPR, 22 [1.1.1.].

169 Immanuel Kant, Grounding, 24, n. 3. “Duty . . . proudly rejects all kinship with the inclinations.” Kant, CPR, 89 [1.1.1]. Indeed, action “for the sake of inclination” is “pathological” (i.e., physical). Ibid., 86.


171 “Were we, therefore, to follow the natural course of our passions and inclinations, we shou’d perform but few actions for the advantage of others, from disinterested views; because we are naturally very limited in our kindness and affection . . . .” David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (New York: MacMillan, 1888), 519. “A father knows it to be his duty to take care of his children: but he has no natural inclination to it.” Ibid., 518-19. “As nature has given [both the body and the mind] certain appetites and inclinations, which she encreases, diminishes, or changes according to the situation of the fluids or solids . . . .” Ibid., 368.

172 For example, according to Mill, Southern and Eastern Europeans, left to their own devices, have a “natural inclination” to cruelty. Mill, On Nature, 82. Mill’s definition of nature is discussed in Chapters III and IV.

173 Mill, On Nature, 82. He rejects the view that “every natural inclination must have some sphere of action granted to it, some opening left for its gratification.” Ibid., 54.
in certain contexts include the following nouns: *amor, aptitudo, aptus, communicatio, desiderium, dilectio, dispositio, generatio, habitudo, habilitas, impetus, impulsum, inchoatio, instinctus, and rectitudo*. He uses *motus* synonymously in rare cases, but usually

174 *Amor*: ST I, q. 60, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.98] (“amor naturalis nihil aliud sit quam inclinatio naturae indita ab auctore naturae”); SCG IV, cap. 26, n. 8 [Leon. 15.102] (“amor autem est sicut inclinatio vel ordo in re naturali”); *De carit.*, q. 2, a. 9 [Marietti 777] (“appetitus vel amor naturalis est inclinatio quaedam, indita rebus naturalibus ad fines connaturales”); *In De div. nom.*, cap. 4, lect. 12, n. 456 [Marietti 151] (“concretio in amore naturali est ex quadam conveniencia naturali ex qua provenit ut aliquid inclinetur in alterum, sicut in sibi conveniens et talis inclinatio amor naturalis dicitur”).

*Apptudo*: ST I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 6.60] (“est in natura inclinatio ad recipiendum actionem a principio extrinseco, sicut motus caeli dicitur esse naturalis, propter aptitudinem naturae caelestis corporis ad talem motum”); ST I-II, q. 85, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 7.112] (“etiam in damnatis manet naturalis inclinatio ad virtutem . . . Sicut etiam in caeco remanet aptitudo ad videndum in ipsa radice naturae”); *In IV Ethic.*, lect. 10, n. 24 [Leon. 47/2.236:252-58] (“si aliquis naturaliter inclinatur ad aliquid passionem, puta ad verecundiam, oportet eum naturaliter habere talem colorem, qui competat verecundiae. Unde si aliquis habet naturalem aptitudinem ad magnanimitatem, consequens est etiam quod habeat naturalarem dispositionem ad huiusmodi accidentia”). Cf. *In De div. nom.*, cap. 4, lect. 3, n. 318 [Marietti 104].

*Aptus*: *In Hebr.* [rep. vulgata], cap. 13, lect. 3, n. 762 [Marietti 2.505]: “Res . . . naturalis dicitur apta ad illud ad quod habet inclinationem.”

*Communicatio*: *In De div. nom.*, cap. 4, lect. 2, n. 298 [Marietti 97]: “materia prima, inquantum desiderat formam quae est similitudo divini esse et certat aliquo modo in bono, idest ut primo bono assimiletur, quae quidem communicatio nihil aliud est quam inclinatio ipsius ad formam.”


*Dilectio*: *Quodlibet I*, q. 4, a. 3 [Leon. 24/2.188:50-52]: “Dilectio enim naturalis est quaedam naturalis inclinatio indita naturae a Deo.”


*Generatio*: *In IV Sent.*, d. 17, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 2 [Moos 4:840]: “in illis autem quae sunt nata recipere tantum, sicut materia prima, sufficit ad violentiam tollendam naturalis inclinationi ad formam; et ex hoc dicitur generatio naturalis.”

*Habitudo*: ST I, q. 59, a. 1: “Quaedam . . . inclinantur in bonum, per solam naturalem habitudinem, absque cognitione, sicut plantae et corpora inanimata. Et talis inclinationi ad bonum vocatur appetitus naturalis.”

*Impetus*: *In VIII Phys.*, lect. 8, n. 7 [Leon. 2.393] (“ille qui divellit columnam, non dat gravi superposito impetu vel inclinationem ad hoc quod sit deorsum: hoc enim habuit a primo generante, quod dedit ei formam quam sequitur talis inclinationi”); *Quodlibet II*, q. 7, a. 1 [Leon. 25/2.232:61-64] (“dicitur pati omne illud quod quocunque modo impeditur a suo proprio impetu vel inclinatione: sicut si dicimus lapidem descendenter pati, cum impeditur ne deorsum perueniat”); *In V Meta.*, lect. 6, n. 829 [Marietti] (“In naturalibus quidem est impetus, sive inclinationi ad aliquid finem . . . et ipsa naturalis inclinationi appetitus dicitur”); *In I
distinguishes it from *inclinatio*. He also equates Moerbeke’s term *natura vult* with natural inclination in one text. *Pondus* and *expectare*, metaphors taken from Augustine and Sacred Scripture, are also likened to natural inclination, e.g., “Augustine compares love to weight, because both incline” and “fire expects the place above.”

But are these terms coextensive in meaning with NI-terms? As is the case with *inclinatio*, many of these terms are typically paired with some form of *natura* or *naturalis* to distinguish them from other kinds of the same thing. For example, St. Thomas says *appetitus naturalis* is “nothing other than” *inclinatio naturalis* and vice versa, but he distinguishes natural appetite from other kinds of appetite, namely the sensitive and rational appetites. Outside of a few texts in which he equates natural inclination with nature itself, the two are usually distinguishable in context.

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175 *Motus* is used synonymously in rare cases, but is usually distinguished from *inclinatio*. In one case, the comparison between *motus* and *inclinatio* is metaphorical: *ST* I-II, q. 37, a. 2 [Leon. 6.254]: “effectus passionum animae quandoque metaphoricarum nominatur, secundum similitudinem sensibilium corporum, eo quod motus appetitus animalis sunt similes inclinationibus appetitus naturalis. See Chapter VII.


177 *Instinctus*: see discussion below.

178 *De ver.*, q. 24, a. 11, ad 3 [Leon. 22/3.711:176-78]: “Augustinus comparat amorem ponderi, quia utrumque inclinat.”

179 Other example include *amor naturalis*, *desiderium naturae*, and *instinctus naturae*.

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*Inchoatio*: *ST* I-II, q. 37, a. 2 [Leon. 6.254]: “effectus passionum animae quandoque metaphoricarum nominatur, secundum similitudinem sensibilium corporum, eo quod motus appetitus animalis sunt similes inclinationibus appetitus naturalis. See Chapter VII.

*Rectitudo*: In II Sent., d. 42, q. 2, a. 5 [Mand. 2.1085]: “Unicuique enim naturae indita est naturalis quaedam inclination in suum finem: et ideo in ratione est quaedam naturalis rectitudo, per quam in finem inclinatur.”

175 *Motus* is used synonymously in rare cases, but is usually distinguished from *inclinatio*. In one case, the comparison between *motus* and *inclinatio* is metaphorical: *ST* I-II, q. 37, a. 2 [Leon. 6.254]: “effectus passionum animae quandoque metaphoricarum nominatur, secundum similitudinem sensibilium corporum, eo quod motus appetitus animalis sunt similes inclinationibus appetitus naturalis. See Chapter VII.


177 *De ver.*, q. 24, a. 11, ad 3 [Leon. 22/3.711:176-78]: “Augustinus comparat amorem ponderi, quia utrumque inclinat.”

178 Other example include *amor naturalis*, *desiderium naturae*, and *instinctus naturae*.

1. Partial Synonyms Distinguished: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Senses

It is precisely because inclinatio has a dual sense of intrinsic “inclining” and extrinsic “being inclined by another” that it can be used ad hoc as a partial synonym or substitute for so many other terms, which is to say, it overlaps with some terms that signify an intrinsic leaning, and with other terms that signify a transitive bending. Its dual sense also explains why, as we shall see in Chapter II, the word proves to be the mot juste for St. Thomas’s explication of natural law.

St. Thomas uses terms of wanting and desire (volo, amor, desiderium), striving (appetitus, impetus, impulsus), leaning (tendere), and faculty or capacity (aptitudo, vis, virtus, potentia, and habitus) synonymously with the intrinsic “side” of inclinatio. He frequently equates natural appetite (appetitus naturalis) with natural inclination in its intrinsic sense.

But appetitus is limited to an intrinsic striving, as he notes: “To strive (appetere) is nothing else but to strive for something (ad aliquid petere), stretching, as it were, toward something which is ordained for oneself.” By contrast, in its extrinsic aspect, inclinatio is born to quaedam inclinatio indita ei a primo movente, ordinans ipsam in debitum finem”). Similarly, in several texts equates “is born to” (natus est) with “has a natural inclination to.” E.g., In I De caelo, lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 3.47]. (“natum est . . . idest habet naturalem inclinationem”). The distinction between nature and the inclination of nature is discussed in Chapter VII.

St. Thomas says that NI is natural appetite or vice versa, there are only nine cases of appet- terms in the treatise on law, three of which are natural appetite (appetitus naturalis). Natural appetite: ST I-II q. 91 a. 2 arg. 2 and ad 2 [Leon. 7.154]; ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.169-70] (1 case). Other appetite: ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.154] (omnis appetitus eorum quae sunt ad finem); ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.169-70] (bonum est quod omnia appetunt); ST I-II q. 108, a. 3, ad 1 (4 cases) [Leon. 7.286]. Two are juxtaposed with inclin-terms. In ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.169-70], he notes that “the good is what all men desire (appetunt)” and identifies man’s inclination according to the nature he has in common with all species, by which every substance “appetit conservationem sui esse secundum suam naturam.”
inclinatio and inclinare can denote an instilling of something into the thing by an outside agent.\textsuperscript{182} A number of terms pertain to God as giver of the inclination to the created nature: in addition to instactus, these terms of divine agency include impressio, inditus, insita. The only term that seems to approximate the duality of inclinatio is dispositio, which has the dual sense of “disposing” and “having a disposition.”\textsuperscript{183} Understood as a participle of instinguere, instactus (like inclinatio) also has the “double character” of an internal natural principle and a “being moved” by an external mover.\textsuperscript{184}

a. Instinctus

\textit{Instinctus} is like \textit{inclinatio} in that it (1) has both an extrinsic and intrinsic sense, and (2) can apply to a range of human tendencies, both animal and spiritual. While “instinct” in today’s English is limited to animality, in medieval usage \textit{instinctus} has a broader range.\textsuperscript{185}

\textsuperscript{182} On \textit{inclin-} as extrinsic, see Gianmarco Stancato, \textit{Le concept de désir dans l’œuvre de Thomas d’Aquin: Analyse lexicographique et conceptuelle du mot desiderium} (Paris: J. Vrin, 2011), 148 (citing ST I, q. 103, a. 8 [Leon. 5.461]).

\textsuperscript{183} If taken in its etymologically primary sense, \textit{de-siderium} (literally, “of the stars”) also has a dual sense, but St. Thomas apparently uses it only in the intrinsic sense. On the sidereal sense of \textit{desiderium}, see Stancato, \textit{Le concept de désir}, 39.

\textsuperscript{184} “Der Doppelcharakter des Instinktes, der als naturgebundenes Aktionsprinzip trotzdem in seinen Bewegungen auf den Beweger zurückweist, wird durch den Begriff \textit{instinctus} sehr treffend zum Ausdruck gebracht.” Max Seckler, \textit{Instinkt und Glaubenswille} (Mainz: Matthiass-Grünewald, 1961), 52-53:

\textsuperscript{185} Few terms are more suggestive of brute animality in modern usage than “instinct.” “[T]he very essence of an instinct is that it is followed independently of reason.” Darwin, \textit{The Descent of Man}, 1.3.100 (1871) (quoted in \textit{OED}). Yet the term has historically had a broader meaning. Writing in 1755, Francis Hutcheson, uses the word “instinct” in an older sense, though a bit self-consciously: “We need no apology for using the word ‘instinct’ for our highest powers, to those who know the Latin language.” Francis Hutcheson, \textit{A System of Moral Philosophy}, vol. 1 (Glasgow: R. and A. Foulis, 1755), 9n. In classical Latin, \textit{instinctus} is the passive participle of \textit{instinguere} (to incite), it typically means an inspiration from a divine or other external source, a meaning which appears in later Christian authors including Thomas. As Robert A. Greene observes, “Classical and early Christian writers do not use the word to refer to the apparently unreflective or spontaneous life-sustaining actions of animals.” Greene, “Instinct of Nature: Natural Law, Synderesis, and the Moral Sense,” \textit{Journal of the History of Ideas} 58 (1997): 176. Thomas’s “primary use of \textit{instinctus} itself to mean an external supernatural prompting or stimulus is traditional enough.” Ibid., 182. Thomas sometimes substitutes \textit{instinctus} for \textit{inspiratio}. See Edward D. O’Connor, “Instinctus and Inspiratio,” in \textit{Summa Theologiae}, Vol. 24, trans. Edward D. O’Connor, 131-41 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). In English, the term instinct carried the sense of divine inspiration until at least the 16th century. The \textit{OED} lists “Instigation; impulse; prompting” as an obsolete meaning of instinct, quoting Thomas More (“secrete instyncte of the holy gost”). On the “internalization” of “instinct,” see Barfield, \textit{History in English Words}, 208. For a comparison of Thomas’s
The “instinct of nature” can refer to exclusively human things, including religion.\textsuperscript{186}

Putting aside the misconceptions in modern English about both terms, perhaps the difference is that \textit{inclinatio} somewhat more precisely denotes directedness (from both within and without) than the incitement or prompting of \textit{instinctus}. Perhaps for this reason, St. Thomas does not often expressly equate inclination with instinct.

\textit{b. Dispositio}

A \textit{dispositio} is neither the thing itself, nor form or matter itself, nor the motion of the thing. It is, rather, that through which the thing moves towards an end. The disposition of heat is to the form of fire, but heat is not itself fire.\textsuperscript{187} Disposition is towards something determinate: “a disposition for something means that through which something is moved to achieve something.”\textsuperscript{188} The term \textit{dispositio} appears to have taken on a precise philosophical meaning in scholastic Latin as a translation of Aristotle’s term \(\delta\iota\alpha\theta\epsilon\sigma\iota\zeta\), one of the subcategories of the category of relation.\textsuperscript{189}

\textsuperscript{186} According to Edward D. O’Connor, \textit{instinctus} “articulates in his thinking the significance of the pre-conceptual (by no means merely biological) element in human nature. . . . [I]t would be a mistake to suppose that his word \textit{instinctus} means the same thing as our word \textit{instinct}, which has come to denote specifically a drive that is natural or innate. \textit{Instinctus} for him is a drive or prompting that may come from within or without.” O’Connor, “Instinctus and Inspiratio,” in \textit{Summa Theologiae}, Vol. 24, trans. Edward D. O’Connor, 131-41 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Thus Albert the Great can say: “\textit{Instinctus . . . nihil est nisi obligatio ex convictione conscientiae diiudicantis rectum in universalibus iuris, quae sunt eadem apud omnes.}” \textit{De bono}, V, q. 1, a. 1, ad 19. See also \textit{SCG} III, cap. 119, n. 7 [Leon. 14.370]: “Hinc etiam Dei cultus religio nominatur: quia huiusmodi actibus quodammodo se homo ligat, ut ab eo non evagetur. Et quia etiam nondum naturali instinctu se obligatum sentit ut Deo suo modo reverentiam impendat, a quo est sui esse et omnis boni principium.”

\textsuperscript{187} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 74, a. 4, ad 3 [Leon. 7.38]: “\textit{dispositio} tripliciter se habet ad id ad quod disponit. Quandoque enim est idem et in eodem, sicut scientia inchoata dicitur esse dispositio ad scientiam perfectam. Quandoque autem est in eodem, sed non idem, sicut calor est dispositio ad formam ignis.”

\textsuperscript{188} \textit{De virt. comm.}, a. 1, ad 8 [Marietti 710]: “\textit{dispositio} ad aliud dictur id per quod aliquid movetur in illud consequendum.”

\textsuperscript{189} See Franklin, “Mental Furniture,” 181. Lewis & Short define \textit{dispositio} first as a “regular disposition, arrangement,” esp. in oratory and music; and second, in Late Latin, as “management, ordering, direction.”
If an inclination is a disposition, what sort of disposition, then, is a natural inclination? At the risk of giving a circular answer, a natural inclination is a disposition a thing has by virtue of its nature. It is distinct from other supervenient dispositions, such as habit or a voluntary disposition. While natural disposition can mean the disposition of an individual, natural inclination in the sense proper to natural law means a disposition a man has by virtue of his form as human. St. Thomas explains that man’s natural disposition, which inclines him to acts of particular virtues, can be either on the part of reason and will (which are common to all men) or on the part of the sensitive appetite (the natural complexion of which varies from individual to individual).

St. Thomas does not frequently use dispositio-terms in discussions of natural law and does not use the term dispositio naturalis (or equivalents) as synonymous with inclinatio naturalis in the treatise on law or any natural law or other law-related text.

Nevertheless, keeping in mind the general notion that an inclination is a disposition—even if St. Thomas does not use the term dispositio naturalis, as a synonym for inclinatio naturalis in its proper sense—we can get a more precise sense of how a natural inclination is both an intrinsic leaning and an extrinsic (transitive) inclining of the thing by God through

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190 Thomas sometimes uses the terms dispositio naturalis (or an equivalent compound) interchangeably with inclinatio naturalis. E.g., In IV Ethic., lect. 10, n. 24 [Leon. 47/2.236:251-58]: “Dicit autem philosophus in praedicamentis quod si aliquis naturaliter inclinatur ad aliquam passionem, puta ad verecundiam, oportet eum naturaliter habere talem colorem, qui competat verecundiae. Unde si aliquis habet naturallem aptitudinem ad magnanimitatem, consequens est etiam quod habeat naturalem dispositionem ad huiusmodi accidentia.” But the pertinent question is whether dispositio naturalis and inclinatio naturalis are equivalent terms in the primary sense of NI as inclination of the nature of the human species. The answer is: usually not, for dispositio naturalis usually refers to the material disposition of an individual in virtue of his bodily complexion, as in the foregoing text.

191 In VI Ethic., lect. 11, nn. 2-3 [Leon. 47/2.375:35-43].

192 Thomas uses the term in the positive law sense in ST I-II, q. 91, a. 3 [Leon. 7.155]: “ex praeceptis legis naturalis, quasi ex quibusdam principiis communibus et indemonstrabilibus, necesse est quod ratio humana procedat ad aliqua magis particulariter disponenda. Et istae particulares dispositiones adipventae secundum rationem humanam, dicuntur leges humanae.” See also ST I-II, q. 95, a. 1 [Leon. 7.174-75].
form. As *inclinare* has a dual reflexive-transitive sense, so does the term *disponere*. God “disposes” (*disponit*) a thing, that is, places the thing in an order towards some end, and the thing “is disposed” (*dispositus*) towards that end. In several places in the treatise on law, St. Thomas uses *disponere*-language in discussions of positive law in a way that illustrates the extrinsic aspect of *dispositio* generally. The lawgiver, through the law, disposes his subjects. For example, the Old Law “ordained” [*ordinabat*] man to Christ in one way “as a kind of disposition, since by withdrawing men from idolatrous worship, it enclosed them in the worship of God.” Divine wisdom, contained in the precepts of the divine law, disposes all things to their due mode and order. Similarly, human laws are dispositions of the natural law.

2. **“Natural” Indicates Ontological Relation, not Psychological Act**

In the Introduction, I explained the distinction between “ontological” and “psychological.” *Inclinatio*, when paired with *natur-*-, signifies an ontological quality, an intrinsic ordination towards a determinate finality, rather than a supervenient, psychological

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193 Anthony Lisska emphasizes only the intrinsic finality of natural inclination as disposition: “The metaphysics of finality . . . argues that an end is to be attained, not because of a subjective desire or wish on the part of the agent, but because the end itself determines the well-functioning of the human person. The disposition has, as a part of its very nature, a tendency towards a specific end. This end, when realized, contributes to the well-being of the individual. This is the crux of natural law moral theory.” Anthony J. Lisska, *Aquinas’s Theory of Natural Law: An Analytic Reconstruction* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 107.

194 *ST I-II*, q. 98, a. 2 [Leon. 7.194]: “per modum cuiusdam dispositionis, dum, retrahens homines a cultu idololatriae, concludebat eos sub cultu unius Dei . . . Manifestum est autem quod eiusdem est disponere ad finem et ad finem perducere, et dico eiusdem per se vel per suoi subjectos.” See also *ST I-II*, q. 98, a. 3 [Leon. 7.195] (the Old Law disposed man to salvation); *ST I-II*, q. 99, a. 6 [Leon. 7.204]; q. 100, a. 12 [Leon. 7.222]. The judicial precepts of the Old Law, for example, were instituted “ad disponendum statum illius populi, qui ordinabatur ad Christum.” *ST I-II*, q. 104, a. 3 [Leon. 7.260]. See also *ST I-II*, q. 104, a. 3, ad 3 [Leon. 7.260]: “illa praecepta iudicialia disponebant populum ad iustitiam et aequitatem secundum quod conveniebat illi statui.”

195 *ST I-II*, q. 100, a. 7 [Leon. 7.214]: “in praeceptis divinae legis maxima sapientia continetur . . . Sapientis autem est omnia debito modo et ordine disponere.”

196 See *ST I-II*, q. 91, a. 3 [Leon. 7.155]: “ex praeceptis legis naturalis, quasi ex quibusdam principiis communibus et indemonstrabilibus, necesse est quod ratio humana procedat ad aliquam magis particulariter disponenda. Et istae particulares dispositiones adinventae secundum rationem humanam, dicuntur leges humanae.” Elsewhere Thomas speaks of human laws as *determinationes* of natural law.
motion or act. The same is true of appetitus naturalis, desiderium naturalis, amor naturalis, and connaturalitas, each of which is an essential disposition following upon natural form, not a motion or psychological act. Perhaps the clearest case of an “ontological” synonym for natural inclination is ordo or ordinatio, which is a term of special importance in the context of natural law, because the order of the precepts of the natural law follow upon the order of the natural inclinations. For example, St. Thomas speaks of an “inclination or order” and says that natural inclination is not an act but is only the “order of nature to act.”

Inclination as order will be further discussed in Chapters III and VII.

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197 According to Stancato, inclinatio naturalis generally means a predisposition following from the being of the thing (akin to connaturalitas), whereas appetitus typically refers to the faculties for realizing those predispositions and, “[s]i l’inclination et l’appétit posse dent tous deux un aspect dynamique, l’inclinatio se réfère surtout à la form substantielle et l’appetitus aux facultés de l’être.” Stancato, Le concept de désir, 148. For example, in the case of sensitive appetite, the desire is uniquely an act of the appetitive power, a passion of the soul driven by the desire. Ibid., 149. Nevertheless, appetitus naturalis, desiderium naturalis, and NI can be considered synonyms. Ibid., 149. As LaPorta notes, “Le terme amor évoque évidemment l’idée de l’activité d’un être animé. Mais il désigne ici la finalité existant en tout être.” Jorge LaPorta, “Pour trouver le sens exact des termes: ‘appetitus naturalis’, ‘desiderium naturale’, ‘amor naturalis’ etc. chez Thomas d’Aquin,” Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge 40 (1973): 45. LaPorta uses the term penchant naturel to capture the distinction between inclination as principle and motion or activity. Ibid., 89.

198 See ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.158] (“lex essentialiter invenitur in regulante et mensurante, participative autem in eo quod mensuratur et regulatur; ita quod omnis inclinatio vel ordinatio quae invenitur in his quae subjecta sunt legi, participative dicitur lex, ut ex supradictis patet”); In II Sent., d. 39, q. 3, a. 1, ad 5 (“etiam in damnato manet naturalis inclinatio qua homo naturaliter vult bonum; sed haec inclinatio non dicit actum aliquem, sed solum ordinem naturae ad actum. Hic autem ordo et habilitas nunquam in actum exit, ut bonum actualiter velit, propter perpetuum impedimentum obstationis voluntatem ligantis; sed tamen naturalis cognition manet; et ideo semper manet murmure rationis contra voluntatem; voluntas tamen nunquam rationi obedit”); In III De caelo, lect. 6, n. 5 [Leon. 3.247] (“Nihil enim aliud est esse aliquid inordinatum, quam esse praefer naturam. In rebus enim sensibilibus apparet quod ordo est propria natura eorum: quia scilicet per propria naturam unumquodque eorum inclinatur ad aliquid certum; haec autem inclinatio est ordo qui attenditur in sensibilibus rebus; tunc enim unumquodque dicitur inordinatum agere aut moveri, quando hoc accidit non secundum inclinationem naturae proprieae”); SCG IV, cap. 26, n. 8 [Leon. 15.102] “amor autem est sicut inclinationi vel ordo in re naturali.” Cf. De ver., q. 25, a. 1 [Leon. 22.3.729:133-34]: “Appetitus ergo naturalis tendit in ipsam rem appetibilem sine aliqua apprehensione rationis appetibilitatis: nihil enim est aliud appetitus naturalis quam quaedam inclinatio rei, et ordo ad aliquam rem sibi convenientem, sicut lapidem ferri ad locum deorum.”
E. Inclinations Other Than “Natural Inclinations” St. Thomas’s Lexicon

Within the treatise on law alone, St. Thomas uses the terms *inclinatio* and *inclinare* in at least eleven distinct senses, ranging from the *inclinans* of the Devil as an extrinsic principle to the infused inclination of grace.\(^{199}\) Is every one of these inclinations a *natural* inclination? The answer to this question is “no.” For St. Thomas, there are many different kinds of inclination. While all inclinations presuppose the telic ordination of some agent, not all inclinations flow from the substantial nature of a given thing.

Failure to distinguish among inclinations can lead to a false identification of St. Thomas’s *inclinatio naturales* with “natural inclinations” in the modern sense, understood as comprising whatever tendencies human beings in fact have. If every observable inclination in man is taken to be a natural inclination, the result is to distort what St. Thomas means by natural inclination in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2.\(^ {200}\) Nevertheless, in the contemporary literature on St. Thomas’s natural law, it is commonplace to see the terms *inclinatio naturalis* referenced as simply “the inclinations” without distinction between different kinds of inclination within

\(^{199}\) These senses are as follows: (1) *diabolus inclinans ad malum*, *ST* I-II, q. 90, pr. [Leon. 7.149]; (2) *being inclined to something by some law*, q. 90, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 7.149]; (3 & 4) the *inclination imparted by the human legislator on his subjects, directly (to the common good) and indirectly (by punishment), respectively*, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.157-8]; (5) *natural inclinations of man*, q. 94, a. 2; (6) *God’s legislative inclining of the creature through eternal law*; (7) *inclinations of all parts and powers of human nature considered severally*, q. 94, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.170]; (8) *concupiscent inclination of the members, called *lex membrorum*, q. 90, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 7.149]; (9) *inclination of sensuality (*fomes*), q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.157-8]; (10) *inclination to act out of an exterior motive (to avoid punishment or gain reward), q. 107, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 7.279]; and (11) *grace inclining to right operation*, q. 108, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 7.284].

\(^{200}\) Is the “naturall inclination to make warre in Fraunce,” ascribed to certain English noblemen by a 16\(^{th}\) century chronicler, a natural inclination in the sense proper to Thomas’s account of natural law? *OED*, s.v. “inclination,” citing Hall *Chron.*., *Edw. IV* (1548). It is not, because, by “naturall,” Hall apparently means “generally characteristic” (which could include vicious habit or evil custom) or possibly “inborn” with respect to a particular nation of people (in virtue of a bodily temperament). For Thomas, by contrast, natural inclination in the sense proper to natural law means an inclination following upon natural form, not a supervenient or merely bodily inclination of an individual or a certain subset of men.
man. Worse, “natural inclinations” is sometimes affirmatively taken to mean all observed human inclinations of whatever sort, good or evil.  

For St. Thomas, there are many other-than-natural inclinations. Some are unnatural or contrary to nature (e.g., sinful inclinations), while others are simply not, in themselves, inclinations of nature. These non-natural inclinations can be grouped roughly into two categories: (1) inclinations from extrinsic principle; and (2) “psychological” inclinations.

1. Inclinations from Extrinsic Principles

In the case of natural inclinations, the inclination follows, proximately, from the nature itself. As noted, there is also an extrinsic, “transitive” aspect to natural inclination. But it should be recognized that there are several kinds of inclination in which an exterior mover, independently of the moved thing’s nature, inclines a thing or gives an inclination to a thing. With regard to bodies in general, the most obviously extrinsic type is an inclination caused by violence, which is contrary to the thing’s natural motion.  

However, violent inclinations are simpler than those caused by celestial bodies, which can incline, or impart an inclination upon, lower bodies.  

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201 John Finnis, in this vein, suggests that the naturalness of human inclinations is unimportant:

“[T]here are many inclinations and urges that do not correspond to or support any basic value: for example, the inclination to take more than one’s share, or the urge to gratuitous cruelty. There is no need to consider whether these urges are more, or less, ‘natural’ (in terms of frequency, universality, intensity, etc.) than those urges which correspond to basic values by deducing from, or even by pointing to, any set of inclinations.” John Finnis, Natural Law and Natural Rights, 91. Finnis add that “the ‘natural’ is, from the point of view of his ethics, a speculative appendage added by way of metaphysical reflection.” Ibid., 36. That is to say that the question of which inclinations count as “natural” is an appendage to central concern of natural law theory, which Finnis takes to be an analysis of natural law in terms of practical reasoning and human experience of the “basic goods.” For Finnis’s doctrine of basic goods, see ibid.

202 The upward tendency imparted to a stone by throwing it up in the air is an example. Violence does not change the stone’s nature. See ST II-II, q. 175, a. 1 [Leon. 10.402]. See Chapter VII for further discussion of violent inclination.

203 An example is tidal motion, which (though natural at a higher order of causality) is against water’s natural inclination to move downwards towards the center of the earth. ST I, q. 105, a. 6, ad 1 [Leon. 5.477]; De ver., q. 22, a. 13 [Leon. 22/3.645:148-72]. Cf. In II De caelo, lect. 27, n. 3 [Leon. 3.47] (spherical shape of the
With respect to human actions, there are several kinds of inclinations that should not be confused with man’s natural inclinations. Two of them correspond to the two extrinsic principles of human acts identified in the prologue to ST I-II, q. 90: (1) the Devil’s “inclining to evil” (ad malum inclinans) through temptation; and (2), the inclination of grace (inclinatio gratiae), which flows directly from God ex infusione. The other three inclinations that come from extrinsic principles are (1) the inclinations imparted by celestial bodies, which incite human bodily passions; (2) the inclination to perform virtuous acts for the sake of an extrinsic motive, such as fear of punishment or promise of gain; and (3) as

earth is accounted for by NI, not by the violence of celestial gyrations); In IV Sent. d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968] (“in rebus naturalibus dicuntur aliqui motus naturales, non quia sint ex principio intrinseco, sed quia sunt a principio superiori movente, sicut motus qui sunt in elementis ex impressione corporum caelestium, naturales dicuntur”). See discussion of universal nature in Chapter III.

204 ST I-II, q. 90, pr. [Leon. 7.149]: “considerandum est de principiis exterioribus actuum. Principium autem exterior ad malum inclinans est Diabolus, de cuius tentatione in primo dictum est. Principium autem exterior movens ad bonum est Deus, qui et nos instituit per legem, et iuvat per gratiam.” Thomas is referring to ST I, q. 114, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 5.534] (on the assaults of demons); ST I-II, q. 80, a. 2 [Leon. 7.84] (“per passionem inclinatur . . . Diabolus interius inducit ad peccandum.”); ST I-II, q. 87 a. 2 [Leon. 7.122]; De malo, q. 3, a. 3, ad 15 [Leon. 23.74:36-37]. The fact that this is the first use of an inclin-term in the treatise on law should be warning enough that not every inclination is a natural inclination.

205 ST II-II, q. 26, a. 6 [Leon. 8.214-15]. The grace of the Holy Spirit is a “habitus nobis infusus inclinans nos ad recte operandum.” ST I-II, q. 108, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 7.284]. Cf. Q. d. de anima, a. 14, ad 17 [Leon. 24/1.129:364]: “inclinatio sive habilitas ad gratiam.” The inclination of grace is analogous to natural inclination. ST II-II, q. 26, a. 6 [Leon. 8.214-15]: “Non enim minus est ordinatus . . . inclinatio gratiae, quam . . . inclinatio naturae.”

206 Unlike natural inclination (which is impressed directly upon the specific nature of the thing by God), celestial bodies “dispositively incline” (dispositive inclinare) a person to an action by making an impression (imprinunt) on the sensitive powers of the human body. ST II-II, q. 95, a. 5 [Leon. 9.320]. To the extent the sensitive powers obey reason, however, man is able to act contrary to the “inclination of the heavenly bodies” (inclinationem caelestium corporum). ST II-II, q. 95, a. 5 [Leon. 9.320]. Cf. ST II-II, q. 95, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 9.321]; In III Ethic., lect. 13, n. 9 [Leon. 47/1.157:124-5]; De ver., q. 5, a. 10, ad 7 [Leon. 22/1.171:241-53]. The influence of the stars, a major factor in human actions in Thomas’s account, is scrupulously ignored in the natural law literature today. As Thomas Litt laments, “Il est impossible de comprendre et d’exposer fidèlement le système élaboré par S. Thomas . . . en passant sous silence sa cosmologie céleste.” Thomas Litt, Les corps célestes dans l’univers de saint Thomas d’Aquin (Leuven: Publications Universitaires, 1963), 372.

207 Men who do not yet have the habit of virtue are inclined to acts of virtue “out of some extrinsic cause” (ex aliqua causa extrinseca), namely, fear of punishment or the promise of gain. By contrast, those who are perfected by the habit of virtue are inclined by that habit to act virtuously. ST I-II, q. 107, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 7.279].
discussed above, the human lawgiver’s inclination of subjects through law.  

2. Psychological Inclinations

Natural inclinations are “ontological” in that they flow directly from the nature of the thing prior to apprehension, motion, or any “second act” of the thing. “Psychological” here means interior inclinations other than a natural inclinations—i.e., inclinations of the various powers of the soul, where such inclinations follow upon an apprehended form or upon some supervenient “second nature” such as habit or custom. For example, the natural inclination of the will towards good in general is ontological, whereas the rational (“voluntary”) inclination of the will towards a particular thing apprehended as good is a psychological inclination. Psychological inclinations include inclinations of the sensitive appetite (passion and habit) and of the rational appetite (will). The inclinations of passion can be either good

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208 The prince inclines his subjects through law, both directly to the common good and indirectly by punishment. ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.157-8].

209 See Chapter VI for discussion of psychological inclinations. Thomas sometimes refers to such supervenient inclinations as “in a way natural” (quasi naturale), but he does not mean they are natural in the properly ontological sense. For example, Thomas explains that the word mos can signify an inclinationem quandam naturalem, vel quasi naturalem. ST I-II, q. 58, a. 1 [Leon. 6.372]. This is because custom becomes a kind of nature and facit inclinationem similem naturali. Ibid. Cf. In III Sent., d. 23, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 2 [Moos 3.713]. A quasi-natural inclination is not a natural inclination in the sense proper to form. When the necessity of sin has been “made in some sense natural” (quasi naturale effectum) to the rational mind, such necessity is of a quasi-natural inclination (quasi naturalis inclinationis). De ver., q. 24, a. 10, ad 5 [Leon. 22/3.708:399-402].

210 Every inclination is consequent on some form. But natural inclination is consequent on natural form, while the sensitive and rational appetites follow forma apprehensae. ST I-II, q. 8, a. 1 [Leon. 6.68]. The sensitive appetite is inclined to an object according to passion or habit. In III Ethic., lect. 17 n. 9 [Leon. 47/1.174:133-4]; De ver., q. 24 a. 10 [Leon. 22/3.706:246-63]. The inclination of passion can be contrary to reason. In II Ethic., lect. 8 n. 3 [Leon. 47/1.102:45-47]. There is also an “inclination of habit” and “habitual inclination” (inclinacionem habitualis). In III Ethic., lect. 17, n. 9 [Leon. 47/1.174:125-6]; De ver., q. 24 a. 10 [Leon. 22/3.706:246]. Habit is a “second nature” (altera natura), the inclination of which “adds something” to the underling power to give a certain stability in matters of operation. De ver., q. 24, a. 10 [Leon. 22/3.706:246-263]; ST I-II, q. 108, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 7.284]; De virt. comm., a. 1 [Marietti 708-9]. Habit’s inclination can be virtuous. ST I-II, q. 58, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 6.375-76] (distinguishing “inclinatio virtutis moralis” from “inclinatio naturae”); In III Sent., d. 33, q. 2, a. 3 and ad 3 [Moos 3.1057-58]. (“inclinatio virtutis moralis”); De ver., q. 24, a. 4, ad 11 [Leon. 22/3.692:278-85] (“facultas quae est per inclinationem habitus, addit supra potentiam aliquid quod est alterius naturae, scilicet habitum”). The “inclination of the will” (inclinatio voluntatis) is “voluntary.” ST I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 6.60] (“sicut naturale dicitur quod est secundum inclinationem naturae, ita voluntarium dicitur quod est secundum inclinationem voluntatis”); ST I, q.
or sinful and those of habit either virtuous or vicious. 211 Reason itself also has certain inclinations distinguishable from the natural. 212 Given the diversity of the human inclinations, it is important to heed Matthew Levering’s warning that “inclination,” with respect to human nature, “must not be understood as one passion or sensual drive among others, but as a more fundamental ordering inscribed in the body-soul constitution of human beings.” 213

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined St. Thomas’s inclin-language in lexicographical and philosophical context and contrasted it with predominant senses of “inclination” and “incline”

211 Virtuous: the courageous man endures terrors “according to the inclination of a proper habit” (inclinacionem proprii habitus). In III Ethic., lect. 17, n. 9 [Leon. 47/1.174:125-6]. The virtuous man is “inclined . . . on account of the love of virtue” (inclinantur propter amorem virtutis) to doing virtuous works. ST I-II, q. 107, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 7.279]. The inclination of moral virtue “is consistent with (convenit) NI in a way, but differs in a way.” In III Sent., d. 33, q. 2, a. 3, ad 3 [Moos 3.1058].

212 Although he usually reserves the term inclinatio to describe appetitive powers, Thomas sometimes attributes inclination to reason itself (inclinatio rationis), in contrast to the inclination of concupiscence. ST I-II, q. 136, a. 3, ad 1 [Leon. 10.102]. Similarly, the inclination of the human mind (mentis humanae inclinatio) can be either “ex instincu [rationis] or “ex inferioribus viribus; et praecipue secundum quod sunt ex originali peccato corruptae.” De ver., q. 24, a. 12 [Leon. 22/3.715:248-52]. In the only case of inclin- in his Posterior Analytics commentary, he speaks of reason—through the effect of rhetoric—being “more inclined” (magis inclinatur) toward one side of a contradiction. In I Post. An., lect. 1, n. 6 [Leon. 1.139].
in modern English. I have argued that the shift from St. Thomas’s language to its modern
cognates can be described in terms of analogy and metaphor. As Ralph McInerny writes,

Since we first know sensible things, the transfer of their names to non-sensible things must
first involve a metaphor. Then, with the sanction of usage and the recognition of a common
notion, these names become analogous. Thus, while some metaphors become but tired
cliches, banalities incapable any longer of eliciting the delight and wonder which was their
original justification, others become analogous names thanks to an extension of their
meaning. Philosophical terms are always open to the charge of being metaphors, at least
philosophical terms in the Aristotelian tradition.214

To say, for example, that a nation is “in decline” is a banality that still refers to physical
down-slope or downward motion. But “inclination” has met a different fate. Modern
dictionaries, enforcing, as it were, the laws of a reductionist view of nature, have “accused”
the word *inclinatio*—at least as it is applied to nature—of being “figurative,” which is to say,
metaphorical. I have attempted to advocate for its acquittal on the evidence of St. Thomas’s
usage, which can be mistaken for metaphor only if we “ignore the common notion.”215

I have also shown, in a preliminary way, that, for St. Thomas, no other term is
perfectly synonymous with *inclinatio naturalis* and that “natural” inclinations must be
carefully distinguished from other kinds of inclination.

In the next chapter, I ask a two-fold question that will shed additional light on the
meaning of NI-terms in the context of St. Thomas’s natural law writings: Whence and why
*inclinatio naturalis*?

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215 Ibid.
CHAPTER II
INCLINATIO NATURALIS AND THE NATURAL LAW TRADITION

The language and concept of *inclinatio* pervade St. Thomas’s discussion of natural law in *ST* I-II, q. 94 and in several related questions of the treatise on law. The three-fold order of man’s natural inclinations as described in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 is often understood as the centerpiece of his natural law doctrine. But is St. Thomas’s use of *inclin*-language with respect to natural law—or law at all—an innovation, or does he simply inherit it from one or more *auctoritates* of the received jurisprudential tradition?¹ A number of historical studies of St. Thomas’s natural law have suggested various precedents for the three-fold order of natural inclinations in q. 94, a. 2, but little, if any, work has been done on the origins of his *inclin*-language. St. Thomas himself provides no etymology of the term *inclinatio* and, in the few cases where he seems to attribute an *incli*-term to another author, *none* of these other authors in fact uses the term in the text cited.² Whence, then, come the language and notion of natural inclination in relation to natural law? This question is worth pursuing, not in order to “know what men have thought” for its own sake, but to better understand St. Thomas’s

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¹ The word *auctoritas*, in medieval scholastic usage, means a *text* written by an authoritative person, such as St. Augustine, Aristotle, or the emperor Justinian. On the meaning and etymology of *auctoritas*, see Chenu, *Toward Understanding St. Thomas*, 129-149. “[W]ether taken in its juridic meaning or in the wider sense of dignity, *auctoritas* originally signified that quality in virtue of which a man . . . was worthy of credit, of consideration, of credence. By metonymy, the word designated secondly the person himself who possessed this quality. Soon after, by a transposition of meaning from the human subject to the outward act, the word came to designate the writing, the document in which the judgment or the decision of this human subject was expressed.” Ibid., 130.

² See discussions of Aristotle, Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius below.
own meaning and to shed light on today’s interpretive controversies surrounding q. 94, a. 2. Also, whether the term is original to St. Thomas or not, why did he choose inclinatio naturalis to explain the precepts of the natural law, as opposed to other terms associated with the natural law tradition (e.g., instinctus naturae)?

I address these questions in two sections. Section A surveys the likely sources of St. Thomas’s natural law doctrines, chiefly the writings of jurists, canonists, Church fathers, scholastic theologians, and Latin translations of Greek and Arabic works. It concludes that, although there are some three-tiered accounts of natural law and natural human tendencies that may have provided models for St. Thomas, NI-language is almost entirely absent from the tradition. Section B then argues that the precise language and concept of inclinatio in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 provide the lexicological “linchpin” by which St. Thomas holds together the disparate auctoritates of the natural law tradition.

A. Possible Sources of St. Thomas’s NI-Language and Threefold Table of Inclinations

This section investigates the sources of (1) St. Thomas’s NI-language, as he uses it in the context of natural law, and (2) the threefold hierarchy of the natural inclinations in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2. My purpose is not to engage in a general inquiry into the possible sources of St. Thomas’s natural law thought, of which there are many fine studies in the English, French, German, and Italian literature. It would be difficult to overstate the influences of Aristotle

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3 In I De coelo, lect. 22, n. 8 [Leon. 3.91]: “Studium philosophiae non est ad hoc quod sciatur quid homines senserit.” The purpose instead is to possess the truth about things. Ibid.

4 Many useful and detailed historical studies of the jurisprudential, theological, and philosophical roots of Thomas’s natural law exist, although none of which I am aware focuses on the origins of the term inclinatio naturalis. For the most complete collections of the relevant texts, with commentary, see Odon Lottin, Le droit naturel chez saint Thomas d’Aquin et ses prédécesseurs, 2nd ed. (Bruges: Beyart, 1931); id., Psychologie et morale aux 12e et 13e siècles, vols. I-IV (Gembloux: Leuven, 1942-1960); and Rudolf Weigand, Die Naturrechtslehre der Legisten und Dekretisten von Irnerius bis Accursius und von Gratian bis Johannes.
and St. Augustine, for example, on St. Thomas’s understanding of natural law and human nature. Also, the influences of Pseudo-Dionysius, St. Isidore of Seville, and the decretists merit further study than they have received.

My purpose is to contribute to a broader study of these influences, but only in a narrowly defined way, that is, by focusing on a portion of the corpus of a single article in the *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 94, a. 2: specifically, as set forth in the Introduction, the passage in which St. Thomas says that the precepts of the natural law follow upon the order of the natural inclinations and then describes a threefold *inclinatio hominis*. As we saw in the Introduction, there is very little discussion in the literature of the historical context and origins of St. Thomas’s NI language or the threefold “table of inclinations,” as Servais Pinckaers describes it. Pinckaers suggests that “[i]ts origin merits a special historical study,” but he does not comment on the origins of St. Thomas’s use of the term *inclinatio* as such.5

My principal focus here is on the *auctoriates* of the “natural law tradition,” that is, the received texts of Latin authors prior to St. Thomas that expressly discuss *ius* (or *lex*)

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naturale, namely those of Cicero, the Roman jurists, St. Isidore, the medieval “civilian”
glossators of the Roman law, medieval canonists (Gratian and the decretists), and
theologians, both patristic and scholastic. I also consider works that may have influenced St.
Thomas’s usage of the inclin-terms in general, chiefly the Latin translations of Aristotle’s
works and the Vulgate Bible.

In an investigation of these questions, one might expect that both the term inclinatio
naturalis and the three-tiered schema of those inclinations would have come directly from
the “common stock” of scholastic auctoritates, that is, from the text of a specific author, such
as a translation of a work of Aristotle, a passage from Augustine, or perhaps a commentary
on Gratian’s Decretum. It is well known in the natural law literature that much of the
language and structure of the questions comprising St. Thomas’s treatise on law (ST I-II, qq.
90-108) are taken directly from these auctoritates. For example, Thomas Seebohm records
that, in these questions, St. Thomas quotes or cites “virtually everything Isidore said” about
law.6 In many cases, the borrowed language is referenced; in other cases it is not referenced,
presumably in some cases because the language was so well know to St. Thomas’s
contemporaries that there was no need to do so.7 Indeed, on the question of NI-language, the
“successful” result of this inquiry might be one of two discoveries: (1) the “smoking gun,”
that is, a text that uses the term inclinatio naturalis in a natural law context in the same way
that St. Thomas does or (2) the “vacuum,” no comparable usage of NI-language in any text

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7 See ibid. for references to Isidore. An example of an unreferenced text is the language in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170], “natura omnia animalia docuit” which, as was well know to Thomas and his contemporaries, comes from the Roman jurist Ulpian as incorporated into Justinian’s Digest. See discussion of Roman law below.
which St. Thomas is thought to have consulted. Likewise, on the question of the threefold order of the human natural inclinations, one might expect to show that another author had already set forth the same three-tiered schema, perhaps using NI-language. The result of my investigation on both questions, however, as will be apparent, is somewhere between the two poles of the smoking gun and the vacuum.

It is very difficult to prove that a historical figure did not take his language or idea from any source. My inquiry is limited to existing editions and compilations of likely sources and I accept the judgment of those today who are considered authoritative on questions of whether St. Thomas read or had access to a particular work. It may be that St. Thomas took his language and three-tiered NI-scheme directly from some lost manuscript of an anonymous canonist, but if so, we may never know it. My goal is more modest: in historical matters, as in matters of human things generally, “the certitude of probability suffices,” as St. Thomas writes.8

Regarding St. Thomas’s use of Greek and Arabic works in Latin translation, a preliminary note is in order. According to Chenu, the scholastics transformed Latin into a language of precise abstraction to serve the needs of the scholastic method and to provide a vocabulary and style sufficient to translate successive waves of Greek and Arabic philosophical texts.9 As I noted in Chapter I, I accept James Franklin’s judgment that inclinatio is a good example of this trend. An entire study, and a lifetime, could be devoted to the possible sources of St. Thomas’s NI-language and concepts in Greek and Arabic works.

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8 ST II-II, q. 70, a. 2: “sufficit probabilis certitudo.”
9 This transformation is “one of the most astonishing phenomena in the history of languages.” Chenu, Towards Understanding, 112.
A few points must suffice regarding what I take to be the three “prime suspects”—Aristotle, Avicenna, and Pseudo-Dionysius—who are the first three sources I examine as follows.\(^\text{10}\)

1. Aristotle

Because St. Thomas stands on the shoulders of Aristotle to such a large degree, some scholars assume that St. Thomas’s doctrines of natural law and natural inclination are taken whole cloth from Aristotle. Denis Bradley, for instance, asserts that “[n]atural inclination is a metaphysical doctrine that Aquinas found in directly in Aristotle.”\(^\text{11}\) Kenneth Pennington, a historian of canon law, concludes that St. Thomas relies “on Aristotle not the canonists” for his doctrine that the principles of natural law to which “people are ‘naturally’ inclined through reason.”\(^\text{12}\) I reserve comment on Pennington’s claim for the canon law discussion below.

On the other hand, a number of scholars draw important distinctions between St. Thomas’s natural inclination doctrine and Aristotle’s understanding of nature. George Klubertanz, for one, argues that Aristotle “rests most basically on an analysis of nature,

\(^{10}\) I have chosen these three because (1) the corpus of the Aristoteles Latinus seems to be an obvious potential motherlode of the sources of both Thomas’s language and ideas; (2) as explained below, certain NI-texts refer to Pseudo-Dionysius in ways that suggest an influence on q. 94, a. 2; and (3) my research, summarized below, suggests that inclin-terms are used to translate certain Arabic terms in Avicenna. A broader investigation could include translations of Themistius, Simplicius, John Philoponus, St. John Damascene and other works known to Thomas. On Themistius’s use of inclinatio for Aristotle’s ῥοπή, see Ruth Glasner, “Gersonides’ Theory of Natural Motion,” Early Science and Medicine 1, no. 2 (Jun., 1996), 169, n. 80 and 170. Thomas cites John Damascene, De fide orthodoxa in the treatise on law at q. 94 a. 3 ad 2. See generally S. Pines, “Omne quod movetur necesse est ab aliquo moveri: A Refutation of Galen by Alexander of Aphrodisias and the Theory of Motion,” Isis 52 (1961): 21-54. On Philoponus and Alexander, see Richard Hassing, “Thomas Aquinas on Phys. VII.1 and the Aristotelian Science of Physical Continuum,” in Nature and Scientific Method, ed. Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Washington: The Catholic University of American Press), 114-116.


whereas in the more personal arguments of St. Thomas, the key notion is that of appetite or tendency,” a notion that, as we have seen, is closely allied to that of inclination.  

Other scholars are at pains to show that St. Thomas’s notion of natural law (lex naturalis), understood as a true lex given by a personal lawgiver, is an addition to—or betrayal of—Aristotle’s doctrine of natural right.  

In my view, it is not necessary to adjudicate these controversies to accomplish the “genealogical” purpose of this investigation with regard to Aristotle. Instead, my focus is on two narrow questions: (1) Does Aristotle set forth a three-fold order of natural inclinations in a way that appears to serve as a model for St. Thomas’s

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13 George Klubertanz, “Thomas’ Treatment of the Axiom ‘Omne Agens Agit Propter Finem,’” in An Etienne Gilson Tribute, ed. Charles J. O’Neil (Milwaukee: The Marquette University Press, 1959), 116. “This is a very real difference, though not a conflict... The shift from nature to powers is due to the Avicennan development. It seems likely that the same reason accounts for the present difference also. For the way in which Thomas uses his analysis of tendency is very like Aristotle’s use of nature. In Thomistic usage, tendency is the tendency of a being and is specified by nature, especially by form (inasmuch as it is a proper accident); it is the proximate principle, whereas nature is the more remote principle, of activity. Logically, therefore, tendency can be used wherever Aristotle had used nature. But, in addition, tendency is closer to activity, and can be said to be more dynamic; this probably is the reason Thomas favored it.” Ibid.

14 On the non-Aristotelian origins of Thomas’s natural law, see, e.g., Yves Simon, The Tradition of Natural Law: A Philosopher’s Reflections, trans. Vukan Kuic (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992), 27-28; Thomas Seebohm, “Isidore versus Aristotle,” 83-105. In principle, the notion of a divine lawgiver can be formulated in “purely” philosophical terms. It is clear enough in Cicero that man, even without the light of faith, can in principle understand morality in terms of a law (lex) that is both natural and eternal. To the extent natural law involves natural theology, it would certainly be a case of one of those truths “which human reason could have discovered,” but a case in which it was “necessary that man should be taught by a divine revelation; because the truth about God such as reason could discover, would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors.” ST I, q. 1, a. 1 [Leon. 4.6]: “Ad ea etiam de Deo ratione humana investigari possunt, necessarium fuit hominem instrui revelatione divina. Quia veritas de Deo, per rationem investigata, a paucis, et per longum tempus, et cum admixtione multorum errorum, homini proveniret.” Whether the natural law can be known (as law) by reason alone is hotly contended. For the view that Thomas’s natural law is inherently “informed by faith” see Harry Jaffa, Thomism and Aristotelianism: A Study of the Commentary by Thomas Aquinas on the Nicomachean Ethics (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1952), 169. An Aristotelian notion of divine inclining through nature could be inferred using the Aristotelian principles that “every agent acts for an end.” As James Weisheipl argues, “It is... clear in Thomas’s mind that Aristotle’s concept of ‘nature’ possesses an innate intentionality or directedness toward some specific end that is attained ‘ut in pluribus’... The axiom... has to do primarily with ‘natural appetite,’ which is innate and coextensive with ‘nature’... Thus Thomas finds no difficulty in relating Aristotle’s doctrine of ‘nature’ in Book II of the Physics with Aristotle’s Separated Intelligence in Book VIII: ‘ut sic opus naturae videatur opus intelligentiae’ [In II Phys. lect. 4, n 6].” James A. Weisheipl, “The Axiom, ‘Opus naturae est opus intelligentiae’ and Its Origins,” in Albertus Magnus-Doctor Universalis 1280-1980, ed., G. Meyer and A. Zimmerman (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald-Verlag, 1980), 446-47.
schema of inclinations in \textit{ST} q. 94, a. 2? And, (2) Do the Latin translations of Aristotle use NI-terms in a way that serves as a model of Thomas’s understanding of the same terms?

\textit{a. Threefold schema of inclinations?}

First, regarding the threefold schema of inclinations, a separate study could be devoted to Aristotle’s discernable influence with respect to each level of the schema, relating to substance, animality, rationality, nature as a formal principle, and the notion of an order among the inclinations.\textsuperscript{15} Farrell makes an important point about how Aristotle’s understanding of human nature is the basis for St. Thomas’ understanding of the threefold inclination as the inclination of a unified nature:

one of the most important if rather implicit influences of Aristotle in St. Thomas’s conception of natural law is the reference in the \textit{Nichomachean Ethics} [I.13.1102b30] to a certain participation enjoyed by the concupiscible appetite in reason. When it is recalled that for Aristotle reproduction is ascribed to the same minimal faculty as nutrition and that these for St. Thomas comprise the second and third elementary urges, it is possible to see in this concept of “participation” the source of the unity of human nature and consequently what may be termed the “continuity” of natural law. The law is continuous in the sense that it extends from reason throughout the whole of the intrinsic operative principles of human nature. Such a conception is impossible in a dualistic conception of the nature of man adopted, v. g., by Plato. It has, too, important consequences in the understanding of St. Thomas’s ultimate acceptance of the definition of natural law ascribed to Ulpian, which founds natural law on that which is common to animals and men. The “community” of these instincts thus becomes in fact principally a community of appearances, \textit{cum fundamento in re}.\textsuperscript{16}

The notion of “participation” with reference to the several levels of human nature is discussed in Chapter III and Ulpian’s influence is discussed in this chapter below.

\textsuperscript{15} See Farrell, “Sources,” 251-53. Of course, an entire study could be devoted to the \textit{influence} of Aristotle’s philosophy of nature and the human soul on Thomas’s doctrine in \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 2, especially regarding natural teleology, man’s composite nature, and the animal and rational components of natural law. But, if the submerged bulk of the “iceberg” is Aristotle’s doctrine of nature, my concern is the “tip of the iceberg,” the precise language and concept of natural inclination. Is this tip found directly in Aristotle or is it Thomas’s innovation? That is the question for this study.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 251-52.
b. *NI-language in the Aristoteles Latinus?*

Putting aside the resolution of the larger question, the issue of Aristotle as a source of St. Thomas’s *NI-language* remains as a “sub-plot” in the resolution of those questions. Do the relevant translations, that is, the texts of the *Aristoteles Latinus*, use *NI-terms* in a way that gives St. Thomas a pre-determined pattern for his *NI-lexicon*? This is important to the larger questions in that, for example, Bradley’s case would be considerably strengthened if it could be shown that St. Thomas’s *NI-language* comes directly from Moerbeke’s translation of a specific term in Aristotle’s Greek (e.g., ῥοπή or ὤρμη). Is there a philological “transmission belt” linking St. Thomas’s natural inclination directly to Aristotle’s doctrine of nature or natural “impulse”? Gustaf Gustafson provides an affirmative answer. He claims that *inclinatio* “corresponds the Aristotelian term ὤρμη,” and, on that premise, that the “connection between ‘natural inclination’ and ‘nature’ are so close that Aristotle sometimes practically equates them.”

Given that Aristotle looms large in St. Thomas’s discussions of natural law and that, as we shall see, *NI-language* is mostly absent in the jurisprudential tradition, one might expect that the principal immediate source of St. Thomas’s *NI-language* is the corpus of the *Aristoteles Latinus*. Surprisingly then, my narrowly tailored comparison of *NI-language* in the Moerbeke and Grosseteste translations with those St. Thomas’s use of *NI-terms* suggests that the matter is more complex than Bradley or Gustafson suggests. There is no

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18 Aristotle’s work had little direct influence on Roman law or canon law prior to Thomas. Even as translations of Aristotle’s works became available beginning in the twelfth century, the application of his thought to natural law was largely the work of Thomas. On the “comparative lack of influence of the Stagirite on the emergence of the idea of natural law into Roman law” see Farrell, “Sources,” 249; and Chroust, “Law from St. Augustine,” 71 (Aristotle quotations, prior to St. Thomas, were “merely ornamental”).
“transmission belt” between the translations and St. Thomas’s works on the point of NI-language, particularly as St. Thomas uses NI-terms in the context of natural law. The translations do, however, use NI-language in certain contexts, which usage, in some instances, may have influenced St. Thomas’s vocabulary.

Using the online Aristoteles Latinus Database, the Leonine and Marietti editions of St. Thomas’s commentaries on Aristotle’s works, and my own compilation of NI-texts in St. Thomas’s works (other than the Aristotelian commentaries) that refer to Aristotle, I have compared the use of inclin-terms in St. Thomas works with the use of those terms in the works of the “Latin Aristotle.” In general, I have found very little correspondence between St. Thomas’s NI-language and the language of the relevant Latin translations by William of Moerbeke and Robert Grosseteste. In other words, in a vast majority of cases where St. Thomas uses an NI-term, the Latin Aristotle does not. A separate monograph would be required to set forth this comparative analysis in detail. In lieu of such analysis, I will discuss three sets of examples: (1) the texts cited by Bradley and Gustafson in support of their claims that St. Thomas’s doctrine of natural inclination comes directly from Aristotle; (2) the few texts in which St. Thomas seems to attribute the term inclinatio to Aristotle; (3)

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19 For the Latin translations of Aristotle, I use the text set forth in the relevant edition of Thomas’ work, where such Latin text is included. Where the Latin text is not included, I have consulted the relevant translation in the Aristotelis Latinus Database: ALD (Turnhout: Brepolis), by subscription, see URL: www.brepols.net/publishers/pdf/Brepolis_ALD_EN.pdf (last accessed Feb. 14, 2013).

20 My research also suggests that in many cases where Moerbeke or Grosseteste use inclin-terms, e.g., to translate ῥοπή, Grosseteste Nich. Eth. X.1.1172a: “Inclinare enim multos ad ipsam et servire delectacionibus.” Grosseteste Nich. Eth. X.1.1172b: “Vituperans enim delectacionem visus aliquando appetens, inclinare videtur ad ipsam ut talem existentem omnem.” In Nich. Eth. X (1172a24-31), William of Moerbeke translates ῥοπή as inclinatio; and ῥέπειν as inclinare. Aristotle, De caelo, in Latin, with Simplicius’s commentary, tr. G. Moerbeke, Venice 1563, 14, col. 2. Moerbeke De caelo III.2.301a: “Quod autem quedam habere necessarium inclinationem (ῥοπή) gravitatis et levitatis, ex his palam. Moveri quidem enim iniquimus necessarium esse; si autem non habebit natura inclinationem quod movetur, impossibile moveri aut ad medium aut a medio.” Moerbeke, Metaph. X.1.1052b [Marietti 558]: again: “grae et quod est quantumcumque habens inclinationem (ῥοπή) et quod est habens excessuum inclinationis (ῥοπή).”
St. Thomas’s NI-texts that both discuss natural law and refer in some way to Aristotle; and (4) St. Thomas’s NI-texts in discussions of heavy and light bodies in his commentary on the *De caelo*.

i. Texts cited by Bradley and Gustafson

Bradley cites three texts: *In I Phys.*, lect. 15; *In II Phys.*, lect. 13; and *In V Meta.*, lect. 6. In the first of these texts, the Moerbeke translation of Aristotle does not use any *inclin-* term. In commenting on Aristotle’s phrase “aptum natum appetere et desiderare ipsum secundum ipsius naturam,” St. Thomas first speaks in terms of *appetitus* and then, as he considers an objection by Avicenna, he uses both *appetere* and *inclinare*.

In the second text, *In II Phys.*, lect. 13, neither St. Thomas nor Moerbeke uses any *inclin-* term. The third text, *In V Meta.*, lect. 6, suggests that *inclinatio*, understood as an intrinsic leaning, corresponds to Aristotle’s notion of ὅρµή (*Meta.* V.5.1015b2), but Moerbeke’s translation of ὅρµή is *impetus*, not *inclinatio*. St. Thomas writes, “In natural things . . . is an impetus, or inclination [*impetus, sive inclinatio*] to a certain end, to which corresponds the will in a rational nature; and whence the same natural inclination is called appetite.”

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21 *In I Phys.*, lect. 15 n. 8-9 [Leon. 2.53]: “Deinde cum dicit: *aliud autem aptum* [ὁρέγον] ὅρµή etc., ostendit idem per rationem ducentem ad impossibile hoc modo. Cum forma sit quoddam bonum et appetibile, materia, quae est aliud a privatione et a forma, est apta appetere et desiderare ipsam secundum suam naturam. Sed contra haec verba philosophi Avice[nn]a tripliciter opponit. Primo quidem quia materiae non competit neque appetitus animalis, ut per se manifestum est, neque appetitus naturalis ut appetat formam, cum non habeat aliquam formam vel virtutem inclinantem ipsam ad aliquid: sic enim grave naturaliter appetit locum infimum, inquantum sua gravitate inclinatur ad locum talem.” Aristotle’s term ὁρέγον is the pres. inf. mp. of ὁρέγω, “reach, stretch, stretch out.” Liddell & Scott.

22 *In I Phys.*, lect. 15 [Leon. 2.51-54]; *In II Phys.*, lect. 13 [Leon. 2.92-93].

23 *In V Meta.*, lect. 6, n. 829 [Marietti 270]: “In naturalibus quidem est impetus, sive inclinatio ad aliquem finem, cui respondet voluntas in natura rationali; unde et ipsa naturalis inclinatio appetitus dicitur.”
texts is in an ethical context nor shows a direct link between Moerbeke’s *language* and St. Thomas’s NI-terms.\(^{24}\)

Gustafson cites a *different* set of texts, from St. Thomas and from Aristotle. First he considers Aristotle’s term ὀρμή, which, he notes

is variously rendered in English as “natural tendency” or “innate impulse” . . . . So Aristotle speaks of the ‘innate impulse’ of natural things to change since they have in their “nature” “as source or cause of being moved and of being at rest.” [Physics, II.1.192b19] Some examples of such tendency are the property of fire to be carried upward or of a stone to be borne downward. The connection between “natural inclination” and “nature” are so close that Aristotle sometimes practically equates them. So . . . the phrase “according to one’s own nature” is parallel with the phrase “according to one’s own impulse.” [Meta. V.28.1023a10] . . . Likewise, those things that are of internal and natural necessity, as opposed to external violence, which happen “in accordance with a thing’s own nature and inclination.” [Post. Anal., II.11.95a1]\(^{25}\)

Then Gustafson argues that

St. Thomas’s thought is similar. For him “natural appetency” follows from nature. It is the principle of motion and is “naturally in a natural thing.” [ST I, q. 87, a. 4] . . . . It works with a natural necessity. [De ver. q. 25, a. 1] It is contrary to violence, which St. Thomas describes as coming from an extrinsic principle and working against natural inclination. [ST II-II, q. 175, a. 1]\(^{26}\)

In fairness to Gustafson, his purpose is not to show that St. Thomas took his NI-language directly from the Latin translations of Aristotle. But his philosophical argument is none the stronger when examined through the philological bottleneck of the translations. In none of the Aristotle texts he cites do we find an *inclin*-term in either the Moerbeke translation or Thomas’s commentary. In each case where Aristotle uses a form of the verb ὀρμάω (“set in motion,” “urge on”), Moerbeke translates it as *aptitudo* or *impetus* and Thomas, commenting on the Latin text, simply says *secundum naturam, propter necessitatem naturae*,

\(^{24}\) It is also significant that none of the texts in which St. Thomas equates *inclinatio naturalis* with *impetus* is in a natural law context.


\(^{26}\) Ibid., 13.
or *mutationis principium*. Also, in none of the texts from St. Thomas cited by Gustafson above are there any relevant references to Aristotle.

ii. Texts in which St. Thomas himself seems to attribute an NI-term to Aristotle

In a few texts, St. Thomas speaks as if NI-term were in Aristotle’s text, but examination of the Latin translation of Aristotle yields no NI-language. A good example is in the *Commentary on the Politics*, where St. Thomas says “we have a natural inclination to virtue, as [Aristotle] said in the *Ethics* [II.1.1103a23-26].” But the Latin text St. Thomas refers to in Aristotle’s *Ethics* does not mention inclination. Rather, the translation uses terms relating to nature and innateness. Aristotle’s text in the *Ethics*, as translated into Latin, is as follows:

Nullum enim natura existentium aliter assuescit, puta lapis natura deorsum latus non utique assuescat sursum ferri, neque si decies millies assuescat quis eum sursum iaciens, neque ignis deorsum, neque aliquid alias eorum quae aliter innata sunt, aliter utique assuescet. Neque igitur natura neque praeter naturam insunt virtutes, sed innatis [πεφυκότον] quidem nobis suscipere eas, perfectis autem per assuetudinem.

In two other texts, *In IV Ethic.*, lect. 10, n. 24 and *ST* II-II, q. 141, a. 1, arg. 1, St. Thomas seems to attribute NI-language to Aristotle, but in neither case does the underlying translation use an *inclin*- term.

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29 Ibid.

30 *Ethics* II.1.1103a23-26, Latin text in Leon. 47/1.75.

iii. NI-language in discussions of ethics and natural law

As we saw in Chapter I, St. Thomas frequently uses NI language in the context of discussions of natural law and related topics, such as moral virtue. One might expect to find an Aristotelian “transmission belt” in one of these texts, but my comparison of the texts suggests that this is not the case.\[^{32}\] In some cases, the NI-language is found only in St. Thomas’s commentary, with no NI-terms or even any similar terms in the Aristotelian text.\[^{33}\]

In a natural law *locus classicus* in the *Ethics* commentary, St. Thomas keys the NI-language to the jurists, not to anything in Aristotle’s text.\[^{34}\] In one case in the *Ethics*, there is NI-language in Moerbeke and in St. Thomas’s commentary on the same chapter—but each uses the NI-term to describe an entirely different thing.\[^{35}\] In his commentary on the *Politics*, commenting on Aristotle’s statement that nature wants (*vult*) to differentiate between the

\[^{32}\] For example, in *In IV Ethic.*, lect. 5, n. 2 [Leon. 47/2.215:17-20], Thomas says “illud ad quod homo naturaliter inclinatur non de facili removetur ab eo; magis autem inclinatur homo ad illiberalitatem quam ad prodigalitatem.” Thomas is commenting on the Aristotle’s words, “magis connaturale hominibus prodigalitate.” Aristotle, *IV Ethic*. 1121b14-15 [Leon. 47/2.214:14-15].

\[^{33}\] See, e.g., *In IV Ethic.*, lect. 11, n. 7 [Leon. 47/2.238:81-88]: “dicit quod pusillanimitas magis opponitur magnanimitati, quam chaymotes, id est praesumptio. Et huius assignat duas rationes. Quarum prima est, quia in secundo habitum est, vitium quod magis accidit propter maiorem inclinationem naturae humanae in ipsum magis opponitur virtuti quae ad hoc praecipue ordinatur ut reprimantur humanae inclinationes ad malum.” The underlying text from Grosseteste’s translation of *Ethic*. IV. 11.1125a32-33 [Leon. 237] is simply: “Opponitur autem magananimitati pusillanimitas magis quam caymotes.”

\[^{34}\] In *V Ethic.*, lect. 12 n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:58-68]. In this text, the NI-term is associated with the jurists. Where Aristotle only says “[Iustum] [n]aturale quidem quod ubique habet eandem potentiam, et non in videri vel non” (*V Ethic*. 1134b, 19-20 [Leon. 47/2.303:19-20]), Thomas comments: “iustum naturale est ad quod hominem natura inclinat. Attenditur autem in homine duplex natura. Una quidem, secundum quod est animal, quae est sibi alisique animalibus communis; alia autem est natura hominis quae est propria sibi inquantum est homo, prout scilicet secundum rationem discernit turpe et honestum. Iuristae autem illud tantum dicunt ius naturale, quod consequitur inclinationem naturae communis homini et aliis animalibus, sicut coniunctio maris et feminae, educatio natorum, et alia huiusmodi. Illud autem ius, quod consequitur propriam inclinationem naturae humanae, inquantum scilicet homo est rationale animal, vocant ius gentium, quia eo omnes gentes utuntur, sicut quod pacta sint servanda, quod legati etiam apud hostes sint tuti, et alia huiusmodi.” *In V Ethic.*, lect. 12 n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:58-68]. As we shall see, the jurists do not actually use NI-language.  

\[^{35}\] In *VII Ethic.*, lect. 13 [Leon. 47/2.430:33-35], where Moerbeke translates παραβάλλειν as *inclinare*, it is with reference to inclination of the many to bodily pleasures. In his commentary, Thomas uses *inclinatio naturalis* with respect to form (calling NI divine) Ibid., lect. 13 [Leon. 47/2.433:165-66], but does not use it with respect to bodily pleasures. Moerbeke: “Sed et assumperunt nominis hereditatem corporales delectationes propter et pluries inclinare in ipsas et omnes participare ipsas.”
bodies of slaves and free men, St. Thomas uses the expression “has an impetus or inclination” (habet impetus vel inclinatio) as synonyms for Moerbeke’s term vult.36 Conversely, where the translator does use an NI-term, there is usually no corresponding NI-term in St. Thomas’s commentary.37 Finally, it is significant that, in many of the texts in St. Thomas commentary on the Ethics, when St. Thomas uses the term inclinatio naturalis, it is usually in the sense of an individual’s bodily, innate inclination to a particular virtue or vice, which, as explained in Chapter I, is the improper, material sense of natural law, not the formal sense of inclinatio naturalis that is proper to natural law.38

iv. De caelo texts on heavy and light bodies

The closest thing to an NI-“transmission belt” one finds in the Latin translations of Aristotle in comparison to St. Thomas’s commentary is a group of references to the natural inclinations of heavy and light bodies, where Moerbeke (translating Aristotle’s term ῥοπή) and St. Thomas use the same terms to mean the same thing. For example, in In III De caelo, lect. 7, n. 1, where Moerbeke uses the phrase natura inclinationem to translate Aristotle’s

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36 In I Pol., lect. 3, n. 15 [Leon. 48.A88:267-70]: “Dicit ergo primo, quod natura vult, idest habet quendam impetum sive inclinationem ad hoc ut faciat differentiam inter corpora liberorum et servorum.” The “false positives” do not end there. In the commentary on the De caelo, Thomas uses inclinatio in the same sense as Moerbeke (to translate ῥοπή), but only to describe the view of Empedocles, which Aristotle rejects. In II De caelo, lect. 1, n. 9 [Leon. 3.122], Moerbeke: “Neque propter circumgyrationem celeriori existentem lationem adhuc salvati tanto tempore, quemadmodum Empedocles inquit.” In the same text, both Moerbeke and Thomas use inclinatio in a very different sense to mean the burden (of persuasion): “magnam inclinationem, idest magnam vim persuasivam,” in Thomas’s gloss. Ibid.


38 See also discussion of natura individualis in Chapter III. In a few texts, St. St. Thomas speaks of natural inclinations to specific vices. For example, he says there is a strong “inclination of human nature” towards the vice of pusillanimity, which is against virtue because virtue’s “chief purpose is to restrain man’s inclination to evil.” In IV Ethic., lect. 11, n. 7 [Leon. 47/2.238:86-88]: “inclinacionem naturae humanae … praecipue ordinatur ut reprimantur humanae inclinationes ad malum.” Similarly, man is naturally inclined to the vice of illiberality (more so than he is inclined to the virtue of prodigality) and to the “love of riches.” In IV Ethic., lect. 5, n. 2 [Leon. 47/2.215:24]: “ad amorem divitiarum.” Although covetousness for riches is natural for the old, because riches help protect life, such covetousness is sinful if riches are desired beyond due measure. ST II-II, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 9.455]. Men are naturally inclined to the vice of “intemperance” inasmuch as that vice is in accord with our sensitive nature. In II Ethic., lect. 10, n. 11 [Leon. 47/1.112:154-55].
φύσει ῥοπήν, St. Thomas simply paraphrases Moerbeke: naturalem inclinationem, qua tendit.39 The correspondence between the Latin Aristotle and St. Thomas in the use of NI-terms in these texts is interesting, but it should be considered that, as we have seen, when ῥοπή is used in an ethical or political context, it typically means the bodily disposition of an individual man (i.e., of nature as material principle), not natural inclination in the sense of the inclination of man as a species (i.e., of nature as formal principle).40 “Psychological” leanings, by contrast, are described as ὀρμή, which is translated by appetitus. Thus, although Aristotle (as mediated by the Latin translations) seems to be one source of St. Thomas’s NI-language, it does not appear that Aristotle’s lexicon is unified around a single sense of a single term as is St. Thomas’s inclinatio. It is also noteworthy that the extrinsic, transitive senses of natural inclination as “being inclined,” that is, by God, are not supplied by ῥοπή or ὀρμή, neither of which is transitive.41 Although St. Thomas’s debt to Aristotle on matters of nature is acknowledged with good reason, my research suggests that St. Thomas’s NI-language is distinctive to St. Thomas, not simply borrowed from the Latin Aristotle.

39 In De caelo III, lect. 7 n. 1 [Leon. 3.250], Moerbeke: “Quod autem quaedam habere necessarium inclinationem gravitatis et levitatis, ex his palam. Moveri quidem enim inquimus necessarium esse: si autem non habebit natura inclinationem quod movetur, impossibile moveri aut ad medium aut a medio.” See also In III De caelo, cap. 2 (Moerbeke: “Quod autem quaedam habere necessarium inclinationem gravitatis et levitatis, ex his palam. Moveri quidem enim inquimus necessarium esse: si autem non habebit natura inclinationem quod movetur, impossibile moveri aut ad medium aut a medio”); In II De caelo, lect. 27, n. 3 (“habet inclinationem ad medium, ratione suae gravitatis,” Moerbeke: “inclinationem habente ad medium”); In IV Phys., lect. 12, n. 13 (“propter inclinationem maiorem, quam habet vel ex gravitate vel ex levitate,” Moerbeke: “In plenis quidem enim ex necessitate: velocius enim dividit ex fortitudine maius; aut enim figura dividit, aut inclinatione [ῥοπῆ] quam habet quod fertur, aut proiectum”).

40 E.g., In I Polit., lect. 4, n. 13 [Leon. 48.A93:224-28]. “Contingit etiam quod filii diversificantur a parentibus in bonitate vel malitia non solum propter dispositionem naturalem corporis, sed etiam propter rationem quae non ex necessitate sequitur naturalem inclinationem.”

41 This grammatical point would require further study to establish with certainty. It should be noted, for example, that the verb ὀρμάω can have the sense of “set in motion,” “cheer.” Liddell & Scott. But Aristotle’s language seems to fit with the view that the notion of natural law as a participation in the lex aeterna promulgated by a personal ruler is not in Aristotle.
2. Pseudo-Dionysius

Although scholars note the “Platonic” elements in St. Thomas’s thought, little attention is given to the impact of Pseudo-Dionysius’s works on St. Thomas’s doctrine of natural law or, still less, of natural inclination.\footnote{On Platonic influences, see Howard P. Kainz, Natural Law: An Introduction and Re-examination (Chicago: Open Court, 2004), 19; Farrell, “Sources,” 245-49. Farrell argues that in Plato’s Republic, “The principle ‘bonum est faciendum’ is distinctly foreshadowed, the natural instinctual appetites accepted as unquestioned data, and a serious attempt is made to establish an order . . . among them . . . .” Ibid. at 247. Farrell does not mention Pseudo-Dionysius.} Howard Kainz, for one, infers from St. Thomas’s description of the human inclinations as resulting from an *impressio* of the eternal law on human nature that the “language here is somewhat Platonic, possibly via Augustinian influence. The idea seems to be that what we experience as fundamental human inclinations are aspects of the eternal law instilled into human nature, orienting humans toward certain natural goals.”\footnote{Kainz, Natural Law, 19.} Kainz makes an important point, for St. Thomas’s *inclin*-language, with its extrinsic and intrinsic notes, well expresses the dual character of natural inclination as divine *impressio* (external) and natural appetite (internal striving) (as discussed in Chapter VII).

As was the case with Aristotle, my concern here is not to undertake a broad study of Pseudo-Dionysius’s influence on St. Thomas’s natural law theory. Instead, I shall briefly look at questions of NI-language and the threefold scheme of inclinations. First, the translation St. Thomas uses in his commentary on the *De divinis nominibus* of Pseudo-Dionysius is that of John the Saracen.\footnote{See Stancato, Le concept de désir, 60, n. 5.} In one text, St. Thomas seems to attribute NI-language to Pseudo-Dionysius: “God . . . inclines [*inclinat*] and turns [*convertit*] all things toward himself as towards the ultimate end, as Dionysius says [citing *De Div. nom.*, cap.}
But there are no inclin-terms in either the underlying text, that is, chapter one of the De divinis nominibus in John the Saracen’s translation.\(^{46}\)

Although the Latin text of the De divinis nominibus does not use inclin-language in any relevant sense, at least one thing in this work may be relevant to the hierarchical schema of inclinations in \(ST\) I-II, q. 94, a. 2. Pseudo-Dionysius speaks of a threefold good. Demons, considered as angelic beings, “desire the good inasmuch as they desire to be, to live, and to understand.”\(^{47}\) St. Thomas refers to this threefold good, citing Pseudo-Dionysius, also in \(ST\) I-II, q. 85, a. 1, ad 1 and De ver., q. 22, a. 2, ad 3.\(^ {48}\) Although he does not cite this text in \(ST\) I-II, q. 94, a. 2, St. Thomas’s account of a threefold inclination towards the good according to man’s threefold nature seems to echo Pseudo-Dionysius’s triad of desires.\(^ {49}\) As Jean-Marie Aubert writes, commenting on q. 94, a. 2, “Cette analyse des tendances naturelles est faite

\(^{45}\) ST I-II, q. 79, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 7.76]: “Deus . . . omnia inclinat et convertit in seipsum sicut in ultimum finem, sicut Dionysius dicit, I cap. de Div. Nom.”

\(^{46}\) See In De div. nom., cap. 1, lect. 3, n. 94 [Marietti 29]: “Est autem ulterius considerandum quod omnis effectus convertitur ad causam a qua procedit, ut Platonici dicunt. Cuius ratio est quia unaquaeque res convertitur ad suum bonum, appetendo illud; bonum autem effectus est ex sua causa, unde omnis effectus convertitur ad suam causam, appetendo ipsam. Et ideo postquam dixerat quod a deitate deducuntur omnia, subiungit quod omnia convertuntur ad ipsam per desiderium; et hoc est quod dicit: et omnia ipsam desiderant,” quoting John the Saracen’s text: “Et sic omnia ad seipsam bonitas convertitur, et princeps congregatix est dispersorum sicut principalis et unifica deitas et omnia ipsa ut principium ut continentiam ut finem desiderant.” Nor does St. Thomas use any inclin-term in his commentary on chapter one of the same text.

\(^{47}\) In De div. nom., cap. 4, lect. 23, n. 600 [Marietti 224]: “Daemones desiderant bonum inquantum desiderant bonum naturale quod est esse, vivere et intelligere,” quoting Pseudo-Dionysius as translated by John the Saracen, n. 253 [Marietti 222]: “Et desiderant bonum, inquantum esse et vivere et intelligere desiderant; non existens bonum desiderant et non est hoc desiderium, sed peccatum desiderii existentis.” See also In De div. nom., cap. 4, lect. 19, n. 541 [Marietti 197]: “bonum desiderant, scilicet esse, vivere et intelligere.”


\(^{49}\) On the Pseudo-Dionysius’s influence, see Jean Porter, “Does the Natural Law Provide a Universally Valid Morality?” in Lawrence Cunningham, ed., Intractable Disputes About the Natural Law (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 77.
par saint Thomas à partir de la hiérarchisation des composantes de l’être humain (arbre de Porphyre) . . . “

3. Avicenna

It is also noteworthy that Latin editions of Avicenna’s works translate the Arabic terms mayl and nizā‘ as inclinatio or inclinatio naturalis. Avicenna’s Arabic terms are, in turn, his own translations of Aristotle’s Greek. For example, mayl is used for both ῥοπῆ and ὁρµῆ. But it could be argued that Latin translations of Avicenna’s terms helped sharpen St. Thomas’s focus on inclination and natural appetite as distinct from the disposition of an individual.51

4. Cicero

Within the natural law tradition, Cicero may be the earliest Latin author whose work directly influences St. Thomas’s thought.52 Indeed, St. Thomas frequently cites Cicero (“Tullius”) throughout the corpus and in several places in the treatise on law.53 Cicero is

50 Jean-Marie Aubert, Loi de Dieu, loi des hommes (Tournai: Desclée, 1964), 57.
51 “The Greek term ῥοπῆ [ῥοπῆ] was translated into Arabic as mayl . . . and into Latin as inclinatio or impetus. Gradually this concept acquired additional meanings and was applied also to other types of motion.” Glasner, “Gersonides’ Theory,” 168. “Aristotle introduces the concept of inclination: ‘we call things heavy and light because they have the power of being moved naturally in a certain way. The activities corresponding to these powers have not been given any name, unless it is thought that ‘inclination’ [ῥοπῆ] is the name. [De caelo IV. 1 307 b33-308]” Ibid. at 169. See also N. Swerdlow, “Translating Copernicus,” Isis 72, no. 1 (March 1981): 73-82. If it could be shown that Avicenna subsumes ῥοπῆ and ὁρµῆ under a common name, mayl, then it could be argued that the translation of mayl as inclinatio forms the lexical basis for Thomas’s understanding of a common natural appetite which is not limited to heavy and light bodies, but also undergirds the rational and sensitive powers.
53 Historians of Roman law classify Cicero (106-44 B.C.), himself a practicing lawyer, as a Roman jurist, but his pervasive impact as a philosopher on medieval natural law thought, and on Thomas in particular, merits a discussion separate from that of his direct influence on Roman legal doctrine. On Cicero as a source of Roman jurisprudence see H. F. Jolowicz and Barry Nichols, Historical Introduction to the Study of Roman Law, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 191, n. 1. For a compilation of all of Thomas’s references to Cicero (“Tullius”), see Clemens Vansteenkiste, “Cicerone nell’opera di S. Tommaso.” Angelicum 36 (1959): 379. Aubert counts 128 references to Cicero in the Summa theologiae alone—more than three times that of all other Roman law sources combined, including texts in the treatise on law at I-II, q. 91, a. 3 [Leon. 7.155]; q. 95, a. 3, arg. 3 [Leon. 7.177]; and q. 99, a. 5, ad 1. Aubert, Le droit romain, 128. Scholars infer that
arguably the primary channel of Stoic influence on St. Thomas’s natural law thought. Cicero does not use the term inclin- in connection with natural law, but his works are a probable source for St. Thomas’s schema of natural inclinations in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 in at least two respects: (1) Cicero’s term “innate power” (innata vis) anticipates NI-language in certain ways; and (2) one text of Cicero seems to be a likely model for St. Thomas’s threefold schema of human natural inclination.

a. Innate force (innata vis)

In the Commentary on the Sentences, St. Thomas references Cicero’s definition of natural law (ius naturale) as follows:

[A] right (ius) is said to be natural by its principle, because it is instilled by nature: and thus Tully defines it . . . saying: “Natural right is not that which opinion begets, but something inserted by an innate power (innata vis).”

Thomas was familiar with many of Cicero’s works, including De inventione, Tusculan Disputations, and De officiis. See, e.g., S. Adam Seagrave, “Cicero, Aquinas, and Contemporary Issues in Natural Law Theory,” Review of Metaphysics 62 (March 2009): 521; Farrell, “Sources,” 260, n. 84. According to Mark Jordan, although Thomas’s frequent citation of an author does not by itself prove that Thomas read the work in full, it is likely he was familiar with Cicero’s works, including the De officiis in particular. Mark D. Jordan, “Cicero, Ambrose, and Aquinas ‘On Duties’ or the Limits of Genre in Morals Author(s),” The Journal of Religious Ethics 33, no. 3 (September 2005): 497.

54 For purposes of this study, I accept Gerard Watson’s judgment that, “for later ages the Stoics were particularly associated with natural law mainly because of one man, Cicero. And Cicero’s presentation of natural law will be our chief concern.” Watson, “The Natural Law and Stoicism,” in Problems in Stoicism, ed. A. A. Long (London: Athlone Press, 1971), 217-218.

55 Cicero does use the similar expression declinatio naturalis with respect to the nature of animals, but the term is not used in the context of natural law and does not appear to have entered the stream of natural law thought. In the context of a discussion of whether any being that possesses sensation is eternal, he writes, “Nullum potest esse animal in quo non et adpetitio sit et declinatio naturalis. Adpetentur autem quae sequuntur naturam sunt, declinantur contraria; et omne animal adpetit quaedam et fugita quibusdam, quod autem refugit id contra naturam est, et quod est contra naturam id habet vim interemendi.” Cic. Nat. D. 3.33. As noted above declinatio (trop.) can mean “a turning away from any thing, an avoiding, avoidance.” Lewis & Short, s.v. “declinatio.”

56 In IV Sent., d. 33 q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968]: “[J]us aliquod dicitur naturale ex principio, quia a natura est inditum; et sic definit Tullius in 2 rhetoricorum, dicens: ius naturae est quod non opinio genuit, sed quaedam innata vis inserit;” citing Cicero Inv. Rhet. 2.53.161: “Natura ius est, quod non opinio genuit sed quaedam in natura vis insecit, ut religionem, pietatem, gratiam, vindicationem, observantiam, veritatem.” Several of Cicero’s examples anticipate things Thomas identifies as objects of human natural inclination, e.g., offering sacrifice (ST II-II, q. 85, a. 1 [Leon. 9.215-16]), knowing the truth (especially about God) (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.169-70]).
Cicero’s notions of a natural right anticipates the intrinsic sense of St. Thomas’s *inclinatio naturalis*. As Patrick Farrell observes, Cicero’s definition “insists on the intrinsic or innate character of the law, i.e., its incorporation into the very nature of things. . . .” But St. Thomas does not embrace the language of *vis* in the *Summa* to describe natural law.\(^{58}\) His preference for *inclinatio naturalis* over Cicero’s power-language can be accounted for in two ways. For one, as St. Thomas makes clear in his *Commentary on the Physics*, it is “ridiculous” to say that nature is a *vis insita in rebus* because it does not convey sufficiently the teleological character of nature as a principle of motion and rest (as defined by Aristotle).\(^{59}\) Also, in the cases where St. Thomas mixes *vis*-language with NI-language, it is clear that the inclination is distinct from the power itself.\(^{60}\)

**b. Three-fold natural impulse in man**

Although his definition of *ius naturale* centers on rationality, Cicero also anticipates St. Thomas’s three-tiered schema of natural inclinations and natural law precepts in the *De

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\(^{57}\) Farrell, “Sources,” 260-61. On its face, the definition does not limit the natural to animality or rationality; however, the examples Cicero gives suggest nature as rationality: “religionem, pietatem, gratiam, vindicationem, observantiam, veritatem.” Cic. *Inv. Rhet.* 2.53.161. See Crowe, *Changing Profile*, 39: “[T]he nature in question is human nature, in which alone right reason is exercised.” There is nothing like Ulpian’s notion of natural law being in common to all animals in Cicero, “who had no doubts about the supremacy of man, lifted above the brutes precisely by his possession of reason; man alone in nature is capable of *jus*.” Ibid., citing Cic. *Fin.* 3.20.67. For Cicero, “*lex est ratio summa, insita in natura, quae iubet ea quae facienda sunt, prohibetque contraria.*” Cic. *Leg.* 1.18. Also, “*Est quidem vera lex recta ratio naturae congruens.*” Cic. *Rep.* 3.22. These texts seem to anticipate Thomas’s first principle of practical reason (the good) and the first precept of the natural law (“The good is to be done and pursued and evil avoided”).

\(^{58}\) In the treatise on law, Thomas does not use the terms *vis* or *virtus* in connection with natural law, but only with respect to positive law (*ST* I-II, q. 97, a. 2 [Leon. 7.190]: “*vis constrictiva legis*”) or as a form of the verb *velle* (“want”) (e.g., *ST* I-II, q. 100, a. 10, ad 1 [Leon. 7.219]: “*si vis ad vitam ingredi . . . serva omnia mandata*”).

\(^{59}\) *In II Phys.*, lect. 1, n. 5 [Leon. 2.56]: “deridendi sunt qui volentes definitionem Aristotelis corrigere, naturam per aliquid absolutum definire conati sunt, dicentes quod natura est *vis insita rebus*, vel aliquid huiusmodi.”

\(^{60}\) He identifies natural power (*virtus naturalis*) with NI, using expressions such as the “power of nature, which inclines” (*virtus naturae, quae inclinat*), “natural power according to natural inclination” (*virtus naturalis secundum naturalem inclinationem*) and “natural inclination of inherent power” (*inclinatio naturalis virtutis inhaerentis*). *ST* I-II, q. 21 a. 1; *ST* III, q. 57, a. 3 [Leon. 11.531]; *De pot.*, q. 5, a. 5 [Marietti 142].
officiis, a work which St. Thomas frequently cites. Inquiring about the elements of moral goodness, Cicero describes certain natural human appetites or promptings:

In its beginning, every kind of living thing is endowed [tributum] by nature, that the life of the body be attended to, avoiding [declinet] those things that appear harmful, and of procuring and providing everything needed for life—food, shelter, and other things of that kind. A common property of all creatures is also the appetite of conjugal union (the purpose of which is the propagation of the species) and also a certain amount of concern for their offspring. Nature . . . by the power of reason associates man with man in the common bonds of speech and life; she engenders [ingenerat] in him above all, I may say, a strangely tender love for his offspring. She also prompts [impellit] men to meet in companies, to form public assemblies and to take part in them themselves; and she further dictates, as a consequence of this, the effort on man’s part to provide a store of things that minister to his comforts and wants—and not for himself alone, but for his wife and children and the others whom he holds dear and for whom he ought to provide . . . . Above all, the search after truth and its eager pursuit are peculiar to man. . . . [W]e esteem a desire to know the secrets or wonders of creation as indispensable to a happy life.

As scholars have noted, this text approximates the natural inclinations (as set forth in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2) to self-preservation, sexual union and other animal tendencies, and both the inclination to live in society and to know the truth (about God, St. Thomas adds).

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62 “Principio generi animantium omni est una natura tributum, ut se, vitam corpusque tueatur, declinet ea, quae nocitur videantur, omniaque, quae sint ad vivendum necessaria anquirat et paret, ut pastum, ut latibula, ut alia generis eiusdem. Commune item animantium omnium est conjonctionis appetitus procreandi causa et cura quaedam eorum, quae procreata sint. . . . Eademque natura vi rationis hominem conciliat homini et ad orationis et ad vitae societatem ingerat et ad praecipuum quendam amorem in eos, qui procreator sunt impellitque, ut hominum coetus et celebrationes et esse et a se obiri velit ob easque causas studet parare ea, quae supputat ad cultum et ad victum, nec sibi soli, sed coniugi, liberis, ceterisque quos caros habeat tuerique debeat . . . . Inprimisque hominis est propria veri inquisitio atque investigatio. . . . [A]vemus aliquid videre, audire, addiscere cognitionemque rerum aut occultarum aut admirabilium ut beate vivendum necessarium ducimus.” Cic. Off. 1.4.11-14. Cicero adds a fourth human appetite—for a certain “independence” (Loeb), so that “a mind well-moulded by Nature is unwilling to be subject to anybody save one who gives rules of conduct or is a teacher of truth or who, for the general good, rules according to justice and law.” “Huic veri videndi cupiditati adiuncta est appetitio quaedam principatus, ut nemini parere animus bene informatus a natura velit nisi praecipienti aut docenti aut utilitatis causa iuste et legitime imperanti.” Ibid. 1.4.14. For Thomas, too, true law must be for the common good, and just. See ST I-II, q. 90, a. 1 [Leon. 7.149].

63 This list “approximates rather closely to the order of precepts which Thomas will ultimately stabilize in the Prima Secundae, i.e., an order of innate rational, biological and sexual tendencies towards objects concordant with nature.” Farrell, “Sources,” 261-62. Thomas’s threefold scheme “had already been proposed by Cicero in his De officiis . . . and so clearly that Thomas’s work might have been an adaptation of it . . . .” Pinckaers, Sources of Christian Ethics, 405. See also, e.g., Levering, Biblical Natural Law, 72-73. Elsewhere, Cicero speaks of natural desire for self-preservation (Fin. 4.7: “Omnis natura vult esse conservatrix sui, ut et salva sit et in genere conservetur suo”) and of a natural aptitude of man to form groups, assemblies, and cities (Fin. 4.19: “Ita que natura sumus apti ad coetus, concilia, civitates”). See Pinckaers, Sources of Christian
use of *natura* is also notable in that it is conceived as an extrinsic agent—one that (or who) “endows,” “engenders,” and “impels”—a sense that anticipates the extrinsic aspect of St. Thomas’s *inclinatio naturalis*.

5. Roman Jurists Through Justinian

Textual and other evidence suggests that St. Thomas was well acquainted with classical and medieval Roman law sources. For one thing, he certainly knew the *Digest* of Justinian (promulgated 529-534). When St. Thomas refers to “the jurists” (*iuristae*), he means the classical Roman jurists whose opinions are quoted in the *Digest*, especially Ulpian, Gaius, Paulus and, by extension, the works of medieval civilian glossators of the *Digest*. In the *Commentary on the Ethics*, St. Thomas implies that the classical jurists (or their medieval successors) had used the term “inclination of nature.” But the language of inclin- is nowhere to be found in Ulpian’s definition or any of the *loci classici* of *ius naturale* in Roman law. Nor are the legislative or “subduing” senses of inclin-terms characteristic of Roman Law. Indeed, using Hermann Heumann’s *Handlexikon* of Roman law as a guide, it

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65 Thomas frequently cites “the jurists” (meaning a quotation from the *Digest* of Justinian) or a specific *jurisconsultus* by name (e.g., Gaius). For a list of Roman jurists Thomas cites, see Lottin, *Droit naturel*, 63, n. 2.

66 *In V Ethic.*, lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:64-67]: “Iuristae . . . illud tantum dicunt ius naturale, quod consequitur inclinationem naturae communis homini et aliis animalibus . . . .” Although he refers to the “jurists,” he is paraphrasing only from the Ulpian’s definition. See Aubert, *Le droit romain*, 99: “iuristae” means “les juristes de son temps, c’est uniquement celle d’Ulpien qui est citée.”

67 E.g., neither Gaius, Paulus, nor Ulpian use inclin-terms. For a summary of each major Roman jurist’s approaches to natural law, see Crowe, *Changing Profile*, 41-46.

68 Computer searches yielded no such usage in the entire CJC.
does not appear that *inclin*-language is prominent in Roman jurisprudence in any context.\(^69\) St. Thomas’s sense of the ruler or legislator inclining his subjects through law does not seem to have a significant, if any, role in Roman law, which is consistent with the relatively marginal role of legislation in classical Roman jurisprudence.\(^70\) In Roman jurisprudence, law is chiefly *ius* (the just thing, as understood by expert jurists), rather than *lex* (written enactment by a legislator).\(^71\) By the twelfth century, however, law is increasingly understood in terms of *lex*.\(^72\)

Although the language of *inclinatio naturalis* is entirely lacking in the *iuristae*, Roman jurisprudence is a good starting point for investigating the sources of St. Thomas’s natural inclination discussion in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 because St. Thomas quotes the *Digest*’s

\(^69\) Where it occurs at all, it is typically a verbal form used in an ordinary literal or figurative sense with respect to certain private law matters. Heumann’s *Handlexikon* gives a short entry for *inclinare* (with no entry for *inclinatio*), which gives only two, ordinary classical senses which apparently pertain mainly to private law matters, not to legislation or a ruler’s inclining of his subjects. In its “literal” sense, the term is used to describe a falling down, as of a tree onto one’s farm. In the “tropological” sense, it simply means to incline to a certain opinion. See Chapter I for references.

\(^70\) As Kenneth Pennington writes, “Lex was a plebian hod carrier of the law; *ius* was a term rich in resonances. . . . *Ius* was the source of justice, equity, and rights.” Pennington, “Lex Naturalis and Ius Naturale,” 573. Even in the early scholastic period, there is “not so much a legal system, as an ongoing process of litigation based on traditionally acknowledged customs, rights, and privileges.” Porter, *Ministers of Law*, 46.

\(^71\) No term in English perfectly conveys’ the Roman sense of *ius*. In English, “law” usually suggests a written text or, in the case of the common law, judicial precedent (whether or not written), whereas “right” suggests a subjective entitlement. Roman *ius* by contrast comprises a variety of legal materials, but especially the opinions of noted *jurisperiti* (something like today’s law professors). In any event, as most scholars agree, the familiar modern notion of “a right” (i.e., of an individual to some thing to act freely within a given sphere of activity, such as free speech) does not exist in Roman law. A Roman right means something more like “the just thing” in a given situation. The right of the parricide to be stuffed into a sack of vipers and thrown into the Tiber river is cited to illustrate the contrast between Roman and modern “rights.” See Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 16.

definition of natural law (ius naturale) in the very center of his discussion of the natural law’s precepts in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2:

[T]here is in man an inclination to things that pertain to him . . . according to that nature which he has in common with other animals: and in virtue of this inclination, those things are said to belong to the natural law, “which nature has taught to all animals,” such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring and so forth.⁷³

This is the definition of the Roman jurist Ulpian, whose work accounts for much of the text of the Digest.⁷⁴ St. Thomas does not embrace Ulpian’s definition as the primary or exclusive definition of natural law.⁷⁵ But he affords it the respect due to the central auctoritas of the civil law tradition, first in the Commentary on the Sentences by describing it as natural law “taken in the strictest [i.e., narrowest] sense,” and later, as noted, in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 and several other texts.

⁷³ ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.169-70]: “inest homini inclinatio ad aliqua magis specialia, secundum naturam in qua communicat cum ceteris animalibus. Et secundum hoc, dicuntur ea esse de lege naturali quae natura omnia animalia docuit, ut est conjunctio maris et feminae, et educatio liberorum, et similia.” Thomas not only quotes “[quod] natura omnia animalia docuit” but also paraphrases the Digest’s language, “maris atque feminae coniunctio . . . hinc liberorum procreatio, hinc educatio.” See also ST I-II, q. 100, a. 5 [Leon. 7.211]; In V Ethic., lect. 12 n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:67-68]; In IV Sent., d. 40, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3 [Parma 7/2.1033]; In II Sent., d. 20, q. 1, a. 2 [Mand. 2.507]; In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968]. The text of Ulpian’s definition is as follows: “3. Ius naturale est, quod natura omnia animalia docuit: nam ius istud non humani generis proprium, sed omnium animalium, quae in terra, quae in mari nascuntur, avium quoque commune est. Hinc descendit maris atque feminae coniunctio, quam nos matrimonium appellamus, hinc liberorum procreatio, hinc educatio: videmus etenim cetera quoque animalia, feras etiam istius iuris peritia censeri.” Dig. 1.1.1.3. The Digest (i.e., Ulpian) distinguishes ius naturale from ius gentium: “Ius gentium est, quo gentes humanae utuntur. Quod a naturali recedere facile intellegere licet, quia illud omnibus animalibus, hoc solis hominibus inter se commune sit.” Ibid. 1.1.1.4.

⁷⁴ There are several conflicting definitions of natural law in classical Roman law. Those of Paulus and Gaius emphasize the rational, rather than animal character of natural law, but Ulpian’s definition prevailed in the medieval civil law tradition: “Whatever its origin and merits, the place in history of the natural law of Ulpian’s definition was assured by its conspicuous adoption in the Corpus Juris of Justinian. By the Middle Ages it had acquired an almost irrefragable authority.” Crowe, Changing Profile, 46.

⁷⁵ Thomas’s much pounced-upon description of Ulpian’s definition as natural law “taken in the strictest sense” (strictissimo modo accipiendo) means only the narrowest sense, not the true or primary sense. In any event, it is clear that in q. 94, a. 2 Thomas reconciles Ulpian’s definition to a larger framework of human rationality without embracing it as primary. Several scholars nevertheless argue that Thomas prefers Ulpian’s definition, as against those of Gratian and Cicero. See Chapter III for further discussion of the “Ulpian problem.”
Ulpian’s definition anticipates St. Thomas’s natural inclination doctrine in certain respects. It is a short step from seeing all animals “taught” by nature to do certain things to the notion of a natural animal tendency towards mating, rearing offspring, and the like—i.e., *inclinatio* in the intrinsic sense of a tendency towards natural goods. Also, the notion of nature as a teacher seems to anticipate St. Thomas’s notion of an extrinsic inclining by God, who “instructs” through law and thereby inclines man towards the his due acts and ends.\(^7^6\)

6. St. Isidore

St. Isidore of Seville (570-636) is, according to Michael Crowe, the “main transmitter of the legal ideas of the jurisconsults to the Middle Ages.”\(^7^7\) In the treatise on law, St. Thomas quotes or cites “virtually everything Isidore said” about law and appears to regard him as an authority on par with Augustine and Cicero.\(^7^8\) In his *Etymologies*, St. Isidore does not use *inclin*-terms in any form. In describing natural law, he instead uses the term *instinctus naturae*, and is rightly credited for introducing the language of *instinctus* into the natural law vocabulary of the medieval “civilians” (i.e., civil law jurists).\(^7^9\) It is sometimes asserted that St. Thomas took Ulpian’s “animalistic” definition of natural law from Isidore and that Isidore’s *instinctus* refers to animal instinct.\(^8^0\) The matter is not so simple. First of all, St.

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\(^{7^6}\) *ST* I-II, q. 90, pr. [Leon. 7.149].

\(^{7^7}\) Crowe, *Changing Profile*, 68.

\(^{7^8}\) Seebohm, “Isidore versus Aristotle,” 84-85.

\(^{7^9}\) “*Ius naturale [est] commune omnium nationum, et quod ubique instinctu naturae, non constitutione aliqua habetur; ut viri et feminae coniunctio, liberorum successio et educatio, communis omnium possessio, et omnium una libertas, adquisitio eorum quae caelo, terra marique capiuntur. 2 Item depositae rei vel commendatae pecuniae restitutio, violentiae per vim repulsio. Nam hoc, aut si quid huic simile est, numquam in iustum [est], sed naturale aequumque habetur.*” *Etymologiae* 5.4, quoted in Weigand, *Naturrechtslehre*, par. 217.

\(^{8^0}\) In the context of natural law, medieval uses of *instinctus naturae* are sometimes identified with a purely animal nature to the exclusion of rationality. “As Ulpian [says] the *jus naturale* would seem to be something of the nature of the general instinct of animals, not properly speaking rational or ethical.” A. J. Carlyle, *A History of Medieval Political Theory in the West*, vol. 1 (London: Blackwood, 1903), 40. See also
Thomas indisputably had access to Ulpian’s verbatim definition through the Digest and St. Thomas’s language in the second tier of natural inclination in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 tracks the language of the Digest more closely than that of Isidore. Second, Isidore does not describe natural law (ius naturale) as something “common to all animals” but rather as something “common to all nations (nationum)” (i.e., of men), which, as such, includes distinctively human things (possessions, liberty, justice, equity). Although St. Isidore does not articulate a three-fold (or even two-fold) schema of natural tendencies, his broader understanding of

Greene, “Instinct of Nature,” 175. But this modern understanding under-interprets instinctus naturae in that it overlooks the “instigator,” an agent acting for an end, namely God.

81 It is also sometimes said that Thomas knew Ulpian’s definition only through St. Isidore. See, e.g., Kevin Flannery, “Natural Law as the Law of Survival: An Exegesis of Thomas Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae 1-2.94.2,” in The Human Animal: Procreation, Education, and the Foundations of Society (Vatican City: Pontifical Academy of Sciences, 2011), 13, n. 20: “The phrase ‘dicuntur ea esse de legae naturali quae natura omnia animalia docuit’ goes back to Ulpian (see Justinian’s Digest 1.1.3), although Thomas probably did not know this work directly. His wording is closer to what is found in Gratian’s Decretum: ‘ius naturale est commune omnium nationum, eo quod ubique instintu naturae, non constitutione aliqua habetur, ut uiri ac feminae coniunctio, liberorum successio et educatio.’” Pace Flannery, the evidence suggest that Thomas had access to the Digest. For one thing, he cites the Digest by name as an auctoritas in several cases, both in arguments and responses, including with respect to Ulpian’s definition. See In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 1, s.c. 1 [Parma 7/2.918]: “in principio Digestorum dicitur: jus naturale est maris et feminae conjunctio quam nos matrimonium appellamus”; In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, arg. 4 [Parma 7/2.966]: “jus naturale est quod natura omnia animalia docuit, ut in principio Digestorum dicitur”; In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 3, a. 1, ad 3 [Parma 7/2.977]; De ver., q. 1, a. 5, ad 13 [Leon. 22/1.20:366-68]. Also, n.b., Thomas uses Ulpian’s term maris (male), not Isidore’s substituted viri (men). See Greene, “Instinct of Nature,” 176. Crowe, See, Crowe, Changing Profile, 74, n. 7 (“Thomas, although he used and deferred to Gratian, knew the classical Roman texts independently of Gratian and of Isidore”), citing Aubert, Le droit romain, 19-23; Emil Hölscher, Vom römischen zum christlichen Naturrecht, Kirche und Gesellschaft, vol. 4 (Augsburg: Literar. Inst. von Haas & Grabherr, 1931), 57-58; and B. Kuhlmann, Der Gesetzbegriff beim Hl. Thomas von Aquin im Lichte des Rechtsstudiums seiner Zeit (Bonn: Hanstein, 1912), 104, n. 2.

82 Where Isidore says “commune omnium nationum,” Ulpian says, “omnia animalium, quae in terra, quae in mari nascuntur, avium quoque commune est.” Natio (literally “birth, origin”), understood as human, takes the place of nascor (“to be born”), understood as the begetting of any animal of air, sea, or land. Crowe argues that Isidore, in effect, returns to a more Ciceronian emphasis on human reason. Isidore accepted Ulpian’s tripartite division (probably known by Justinian’s Digest or Institutes), “[b]ut in adopting this division, Isidore effectively changed the terms . . . . He abandons entirely the natural law of Ulpian, common to all animals. … In fact he returns to something not unlike the natural law of Cicero—and his mixture of Ulpian and Gaius has a good deal in common with the Institutes’s definition of the jus gentium.” Crowe, Changing Profile, 69. Greene argues that Isidore used instinctus in the opposite sense of what we would expect: “Isidore’s choice of instinctus to designate a stimulus experienced only by human beings conformed to contemporary usage by being consistent with his restriction of the operation of natural law to mankind.” Greene, “Instinct of Nature,” 176. In any event, Isidore’s language takes the animality of Ulpian’s language and weaves it into a broader understanding of human nature.
instinctus naturae as an instinct of human nature which comprises both animal and rational things anticipates, in a way, St. Thomas’s understanding of inclinatio naturalis as a multi-layered tendency instilled in man. Thus St. Isidore’s influence is not merely in transmitting Ulpian’s definition, but also in providing a model for a distinctively human natural law.

7. Medieval Civilians

By the twelfth century, civil law jurists (“civilians”) had begun to study and comment upon the Corpus iuris civilis of Justinian. The civilians—in sharp contrast to canonists and theologians in the same period—accept Ulpian’s natural law definition on the authority of the Digest. The civilians do not use inclin-language to describe natural law. Instead, they typically use the term instinctus. Despite the broader range of the term instinctus in medieval Latin (which could also be the instinct of, for example, reason or of grace), the civilians use instinctus to refer to that which man has in common with other animals, i.e., consistent with Ulpian’s usage. For example, according to the civilian Placentinus (d. 1192), natural law is “what nature teaches all animals,’ i.e., through the instinct of nature.” Similarly, two of the most prominent of the thirteenth-century civilians, Azo (d. c. 1230) and Accursius (1184-
1263), take Ulpian’s definition, understood as instinct common to all animals, as the primary definition of natural law.  

Perhaps the main significance of the civilians in relation to St. Thomas is that their natural law discussions keep the old Roman law definition in currency, even at a time when most canonists and theologians are moving further away from Ulpian’s emphasis on animality. St. Thomas is generally familiar with Roman law and with the civilians’ reliance on Ulpian’s lapidary definition of natural law. In any event, St. Thomas, in contrast to St. Albert and other theologians, accepts the civilians’ definition as an auctoritas to be reckoned with—and places it in the center of his discussion of man’s three-tier inclination in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2. But St. Thomas also chooses to formulate his natural law descriptions with the language of inclinatio, a term which is more precise than instinctus, as discussed above.

8. Medieval Canonists

To return to Kenneth Pennington’s point about St. Thomas’s reliance on “Aristotle, not the canonists,” my own examination of the canonical texts on natural law suggests that the matter is more complex than Pennington’s categorical claim would indicate. Medieval canon law, although influenced by Roman law, constitutes a distinct tradition, especially with respect to the canonists’ treatment of natural law. Although not a canonist by training, St.

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87 Aubert concludes that there is no doubt Thomas was acquainted with the “romanist milieu” especially at Bologna. Aubert, Le droit romain, 129. “Ainsi, sans être dans son œvre un juriste à proprement parler, et malgré les déficiences imputables à une carence de formation juridique, saint Thomas se situe cependant admirablement dans la ligne spirituelle des grands romanistes médiévaux qui . . . ont été les fondateurs de la science moderne du droit.” Ibid., 138-39; see also ibid., 76-79. Thomas Seebohm argues that, for Thomas, just as Augustine was a Church father, not a representative of neoplatonism, likewise “a Roman jurist was a jurist, not a mediocre Stoic. The jurists represent human reason in their field equally well as does Aristotle in philosophy.” Seebohm, “Isidore versus Aristotle,” 83. As Crowe notes: “the real meaning of natural law for the civilians, is that found in the Roman law, namely Ulpian’s . . . from them it was to find its way into the canonists and, more importantly, into the theologians.” Crowe, Changing Profile, 93.
Thomas is familiar with Gratian’s *Decretum* and with the works of important canonists of his day, particularly Raymund of Pennafort. The language of inclination is almost wholly absent from the writings of the medieval canonists prior to St. Thomas, particularly with respect to natural law. But the chief influence of the canonical tradition on St. Thomas’ natural law synthesis is its expressly theological approach to natural law. Where medieval civil lawyers accepted Ulpian’s definition (natural law as that which is common to all animals) as the primary sense of natural law, canonists did nearly the opposite by emphasizing the connection between natural law and divine law. Patrick Delhaye speaks of a certain “sacral tendency” in the canonists, who conceived of natural law as “une sorte de condensé de la loi mosaique et de l’Evangile.” Although St. Thomas employs a more philosophical notion of divine inclining of man through the human nature established by God, in doing so he nevertheless accounts for the divine origins of natural law emphasized by the canonists.

*a. Gratian*

The most influential exponent of this “sacral” natural law is Gratian (fl. 1140), the greatest of the medieval canonists and author of the *Concordia discordantium canonum*, commonly known as the *Decretum*, a work which itself provides a model for Peter Lombard

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89 A review of the compilations of Lottin and Weigand yields one exception: the anonymous twelfth century canonical *Summa inter cetera*, discussed below.

and other early scholastics in their effort to harmonize conflicting theological 
sententiae.\footnote{As Christopher Dawson writes, “in the twelfth century, the age of Gratian and Peter Lombard, theology and canon law still overlapped one another, and dealt to some extent with the same subject matter.” C. Dawson, \textit{The Formation of Christendom} (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1967), 211.} In the \textit{Decretum}, there is only one case of an \textit{inclin-} term, used in a 
characteristically Christian sense (indicating humility) but unrelated to natural law or human nature.\footnote{“Inclinatio uel descensio humilitatem significat.” \textit{Decretum magistri Gratiani (Concordia discordantium canonum)}, pars 2, causa 2, q. 7, cn. 27.} Gratian’s significance for purposes of this study lies in his definition of natural law, the influence of which rivals or exceeds those of Ulpian and Cicero in the middle ages prior to St. Thomas. According to Gratian,

> The Human Race is ruled by two things: namely, natural law (\textit{ius naturale}) and custom (\textit{mos}). The \textit{ius} of nature is what is contained in the Law (\textit{lex}) and the Gospel. By it, each person is commanded to do to others what he wants done to himself and is prohibited from inflicting on others what he does not want done to himself. Thus Christ said in the Gospel: “Whatever you want men to do to you, do so to them. For this is the Law and the prophets.”\footnote{Gratian, \textit{Decretum}, dist.1, cn.1: “Humanum genus duobus regitur, naturali uidelicet iure et moribus. \textit{Ius naturae} est, quod \textit{in lege et euangelio continetur}, quo quisque iubetur alii facere, quod sibi uult fieri, et prohibit alii inferrer, quod sibi nolit fieri. Unde Christus in euangelio: ‘Omnia quecunque uultis ut faciant uobis homines, et uos eadem facite illis. Haec est enim lex et prophetae.’ [Matthew 7:12, cf. Luke 6:31].”} The notion of “natural law” as being “contained (\textit{continetur}) in the law and the Gospel” seems to have little to do with nature at all, but rather with divine positive (i.e., revealed) law.

In the treatise on law, St. Thomas mentions Gratian’s definition only once. His concern is not to refute Gratian, but to draw an analytical distinction between natural law and divine positive law. St. Thomas considers the question of whether there is one natural law for all people. It is objected that, because the natural law is “what is contained in the law and the Gospel,” which not everyone follows, the natural law is not common to all men.\footnote{\textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 4, arg. 1 [Leon. 7.171]: “Dicitur enim in decretis, dist. I, quod \textit{ius naturale est quod in lege et in Evangelio continetur}. Sed hoc non est commune omnibus, quia, ut dicitur Rom. X, \textit{non omnes obedient Evangelio}. Ergo lex naturalis non est una apud omnes.”} In reply, he clarifies that, when Gratian says, “contained in” the Scriptures, he means only those things...
that are of the natural law, not things that are “above nature.” The moral precepts of the Divine law are recapitulations of natural law precepts which, though in principle knowable by natural reason, are difficult to understand due to original sin. Gratian’s example of the natural law, the Golden Rule, is, according to St. Thomas, knowable by nature. In the treatise on law, St. Thomas thus readily sets Gratian’s scriptural language aside in favor of a forthrightly “naturalistic” approach.

But earlier, in the Commentary on the Sentences, St. Thomas grapples with Gratian’s language in a different way. Seeking to explain Gratian’s authoritative and theological definition in natural—which is to say, philosophical—terms, St. Thomas speaks of an “impression” and “infusion” by a superior, extrinsic principle. Thus, in the context of an explanation of several senses of the term ius naturale, he explains one sense, Gratian’s, as follows:

And since even in natural things certain movements are called natural, not that they be from an intrinsic principle, but because they are from a higher moving principle—thus the movements that are caused in the elements by the impress of heavenly bodies are said to be natural, as the Commentator states (De Cael. III.28), therefore those things that are of Divine right are said to be of natural right (ius), because they are caused by the impress and influence

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95 E.g., ST I-II, q. 94, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 7.172]: “verbum illud non est sic intelligendum quasi omnia quae in lege et in Evangelio continetur, sint de lege naturae, cum multa tradantur ibi supra naturam, sed quia ea quae sunt de lege naturae, plenarie ibi traduntur. Unde cum dixisset Gratianus quod ius naturale est quod in lege et in Evangelio continetur, statim, exemplificando, subiuexit, quo quisque iubetur alii facere quod sibi vult fieri.” Gratian too acknowledges that “not everything contained in the Law and the Gospel pertains to natural law” and he distinguishes between the moral precepts and the “mystical” precepts dealing with sacrifice and other matters, Decretum, dist. 6, cn. 3, § 1: “In lege et Evangelio naturale ius continetur; non tamen quaecunque in lege et Evangelio inueniuntur, naturali iuri coherere probantur. Sunt enim in lege quaedam moralia, ut: non occide et cetera, quaedam mistica, utpote sacrificiorum precepta, et alia his similia. Moralia mandata ad naturale ius spectant atque ideo nullam mutabilitatem recepisse monstrantur. Mistica uero, quantum ad superficiem, a naturali iure probantur aliena, quantum ad moralem intelligentiam, inueniuntur sibi annexa; ac per hoc, etsi secundum superficiem uideantur esse mutata, tamen secundum moralem intelligentiam mutabilitatem nescire probantur.”

96 God gives the positive law to bring clarity to human minds darkened by sin. On the relationship between the precepts of the Old Law and those of the natural law, see Randall Smith, “What the Old Law Reveals About the Natural Law According to Thomas Aquinas,” The Thomist 75 (2011): 95-139.
of a higher principle, namely God. Isidore [sc. Gratian] takes it in this sense, when he says (Etym. V) that “the natural right is that which is contained in the Law and the Gospel.”

Whether Gratian thinks of the law and the gospels in philosophical terms of celestial causality or the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic principles is immaterial. The important thing is that this early text represents an effort by St. Thomas to incorporate a major natural law auctoritas into his developing synthesis of natural law doctrines. Because the precepts of the divine law are known by the intellect (whether naturally or by the light of faith), this text also represents the notion, embraced by canonists and theologians thereafter, of natural law as pertaining to human beings specifically (rather than to all animals). As discussed below in section B below, St. Thomas later combines the extrinsic and intrinsic, as well as the animal and the rational, in his doctrine and language of natural inclination in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

b. Decretists: Twelfth Century

The “decretists” are canon lawyers known for their glosses on Gratian’s Decretum.

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97 In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968]. “Et quia etiam in rebus naturalibus dicuntur aliqui motus naturales, non quia sint ex principio intrinseco, sed quia sunt a principio superiori movente, sicut motus qui sunt in elementis ex impressione corporum caelestium, naturales dicuntur, ut Commentator dicit in 3 caeli et mundi; ideo ea quae sunt de jure divino, dicuntur esse de jure naturali, cum sint ex impressione et infusione superioris principii, scilicet Dei; et sic accipitur ab Isidoro, qui dicit, quod jus naturale est quod in lege et in Evangelio continetur.” In the treatise on law, Thomas correctly attributes the definition to Gratian. This text is in the context of a discussion of the ends of marriage. Thomas mistakenly attributes Gratian’s definition to Isidore, perhaps because Gratian quotes Isidore extensively.

98 Gratian’s placement of his definition at the beginning of the Decretum may be intended as a rebuke to Justinian’s placement of Ulpian’s definition at the beginning of the Digest. See Crowe, Changing Profile, 70-72.

99 In the Commentary on the Sentences text quoted above, In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968], although Thomas uses inclinatio in the corpus of the response in the same article (in an intrinsic sense), he does not yet expressly connect inclinatio in the extrinsic sense with the “principio superiori movente” of natural law. In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968]. The use is inclinatio in the corpus of the article is as follows: In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.967]: “Sicut autem in rebus agentibus ex necessitate naturae sunt principia actionum ipsae formae, a quibus operationes proprie prodeunt convenientes fini; ita in his quae cognitionem participant, principia agendi sunt cognition et appetitus; unde oportet quod in vi cognoscentiva sit naturalis conceptio, et in vi appetitiva naturalis inclinatio, quibus operatio conveniens generi sive speciei reddatur competens fini.”
The decretists, despite starting from Gratian’s scriptural definition of *ius naturale*, increasingly speak in philosophical terms. They do not describe the divine origins of natural law solely in terms of the Decalogue and the Gospels, as in Gratian’s definition, but rather in terms of an *instinctus, inditus*, or *inspiratio* that comes from outside the creature. Surprisingly, nature is sometimes identified with God as creator: the one who instills the law in man.

### i. Huguccio and Rufinus

Exemplifying this trend, writing around 1188, Huguccio of Ferrera says that the divine law of Sacred Scripture “is said to be natural law, because the highest nature, that is, God, transmitted it and taught it to us.” At the same time, the twelfth-century decretists begin to emphasize the intrinsically rational character of natural law. Thus, Huguccio continues, natural law is called divine law also “because natural reason leads and impels us

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100 This trend is consistent with a general trend in early scholastic thought. Leo Elders notes that Peter Lombard “states that natural law, which is the same for all men, is prior to the commandments of Moses. . . . Gradually a transition takes place in the study of natural law to a more philosophical approach. Natural law is seen as the order established and prescribed by natural reason. Our reason discovers in our nature what is needed to live morally, formulates it and considers it as binding.” Leo J. Elders, *The Ethics of Thomas Aquinas: Happiness, Natural Law and the Virtues* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 208.

101 E.g., the *Summa Coloniensis*: “quod instinctu nature apud omnes est.” Lottin, *Droit naturel*, 16. Although the terms *instinctus, inditus*, and *inspiratio* involve something within the creature, the dominant note signified by such terms in Latin is that of an exterior agent “instigating,” “placing in,” or “inspiring” the creature. The English nouns instinct and inspiration no longer carry this extrinsic note; they are examples of the process of internalization described by Owen Barfield, as discussed in Chapter I.

102 By the twelfth century, prominent canonists use the striking expression “*Natura, id est deus*” with reference to natural law. For Huguccio Gratian’s definition “accipitur in principio; et dicitur hoc ius naturale, quia summa natura, id est deus nobis illud tradidit et docuit per legem et prophetas et evangelium, uel quia ad ea que iure diuinio continentur, naturalis ratio etiam in extrinsecus erudicione ducit et impellit.” Quoted in Lottin, *Droit naturel*, 109-110. For Stephen of Tournai (1128-1203), God is the nature that teaches: “Ius etiam divinum dicitur naturale, quod summa natura nostra, id est deus nos docuit et per legem et prophetas et evangelium suum nobis obtulit. Dictur etiam ius naturale, quod simul comprehendit humanum et divinum et illud, quod a natura omnibus est animalibus insitum.” Quoted in Weigand, *Naturrechtslehre*, par. 245. See also Odo of Dover, “Est . . . ius naturale in generaliore significatione uis quedam insita omni creature a summa omnium natura, id est a Deo.” Quoted in Weigand, *Naturrechtslehre*, par. 269. This language should not be taken in a pantheistic sense. For these decretists, the natural law “proceeded from the *summa natura* that was God himself.” Brian Tierney, “*Natura Id Est Deus*: A Case of Juristic Pantheism?” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24 (1963), 313; Crowe, *Changing Profile*, 97-98.
even through extrinsic instruction to those things which are contained in the divine law."  

Gratian’s explanation of natural law in terms of the Golden Rule is increasingly conceived as a rational principle of justice flowing from the power (vis) of reason. Thus, Huguccio’s primary and preferred sense of natural law is simply “reason, insofar as it is a natural power of the soul by which man (homo) distinguishes between good and evil.” The combination of instilling by God the “highest nature” (summa natura) into the creature and a reasoning power within the creature is expressed using variations of Cicero’s innata vis inseruit. For example, Rufinus of Assissi (fl. c. 1157-59), even before Huguccio, calls natural law “a certain power instilled (vis insitâ) in the human creature by nature to do the good and to avoid its contrary.”

It is unclear whether St. Thomas read Huguccio and other late twelfth-century decretists. But these combined emphases on divine instilling and natural reasoning, from whatever source, are present in St. Thomas’s natural law thought in several ways. He sometimes speaks using language similar to that of the decretists. For example, Patrick Farrell infers that St. Thomas draws from Rufinus the first precept of the natural law: “the

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103 Huguccio, quoted in Lottin, Droit naturel, 109-110 (text in previous note).
104 Michael Crowe describes an interpretation of Gratian’s definition as speaking “not of determinate behaviour but of a formal norm of conduct, expressed in the Golden Rule, found in the Law and the gospel . . . to which behaviour must conform. Gratian, thus, gives a ‘most typical formulation of rational natural law’ in which it is not so much a matter of reducing natural law to divine law but the reverse!” Crowe, Changing Profile, 84.
105 “Ius naturale . . . dicitur ratio, scilicet naturalis uis animi ex qua homo discernit inter bonum et malum, eligendo bonum et detestando malum.” Quoted in Lottin, Droit naturel, 109. My translation is a variation of Jean Porter’s in Nature as Reason, 14.
106 “[E]st naturale ius usi quaedam humane creature a natura insita ad faciendum bonum cauendumque contrarium.” Rufinus, Summa Decretorum, quoted in Lottin, Droit naturel, 13. The translation is Jean Porter’s (Nature as Reason, 266) of Rufinus’s close paraphrase of Cicero’s De inventione. Rufinis is writing circa 1157-59. As Michael Crowe notes, Rufinus’s language is reminiscent of Cicero’s “ratio summa insita in natura” and “quod . . . quaedam innata vis inseruit.” Crowe, Changing Profile, 96. “In general Rufinus’s view must be counted within the rational tradition of natural law coming from the Stoics, through Cicero, to the Middle Ages.” Ibid.
good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided” (I-II, q. 94, a. 2). St. Thomas says the natural law is promulgated “by the very fact that God instilled [inseruit] it into man’s mind so as to be known by him naturally.”

ii. *Summa inter cetera* (anonymous) and natural inclination

The only canonical work in the Lottin and Weigand collections that describes natural law in terms of natural inclination is the anonymous *Summa inter cetera que ecclesiastice dignitati* (c. 1160-70), which describes a “strict” sense of natural law as “applying only to man, namely a certain force which the divinity infused into man, by which he is naturally inclined [naturaliter inclinatur] to that which is just and equitable.” Whether or not St. Thomas knew this particular text, it is remarkable that the work reserves NI-language for things pertaining to man’s rational nature (i.e., the “just and equitable”). Also, far from associating natural inclination with a merely intrinsic urge, this text presents the inclination as flowing from a sort of divine inspiration.

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107 ST I-II, q. 90, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 7.152] “promulgatio legis naturae est ex hoc ipso quod Deus eam mentibus hominum inseruit naturaliter cognoscendam.”

108 The *Summa inter cetera que ecclesiastice dignitati*, produced by an anonymous author of the “French and Rhenish school” of the 1160s and 1170s, gives three senses of *ius naturale*: (1) *larginissime*: a power instilled in every creature by the highest nature, i.e., God (“uis insita omni creature a natura, id est a deo, qui summa natura est omnium”); (2) *minus large*: Ulpian’s definition of the natural law as what nature teaches all animals; and (3) *large*: “et strictiori naturale ius accipitur prout omni et soli homini competit, uis quedam scilicet diuinitus homini inspirata qua ad id quod iustum et equum est naturaliter inclinatur.” Quoted in Weigand, *Naturrechtslehre*, pars. 282-86.

109 Neither Weigand nor Lottin remarks on the anonymous author’s use of NI-language. According to Kenneth Pennington, this text is one of several “fragments and miscellaneous writings associated with the *Summa Monacensis*, probably going back to the same Parisian master through other students or other traditions” but is “markedly more dependent on Odo of Dover in its treatment of natural law.” Pennington, *The History of Medieval Canon Law in the Classical Period, 1140-1234: from Gratian to the Decretals of Pope Gregory IX* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 188.

110 This language is consistent with the trend among many twelfth century canonists to interpret natural law in the sense of a “force which engenders,” in Delhaye’s words. Natural law in this sense derives from the highest nature (*summa natura*), i.e. God. Delhaye, *Permanence du droit naturel*, 11.
iii. Odo of Dover and the three-tiered natural law

In his canonical Summa, Odo of Dover (fl. 1160-1170), writes that natural law is said in three ways:

Natural law is in the more general signification a certain power instilled in every creature by the highest of all nature, namely from God. By this law the stars do not stray from their courses, water returns to its sources, iron is attracted to magnets, and similar things. In a narrower [minus large] sense natural law is said to be a certain force instilled in all living things from which proceeds that which is naturally stimulated to coition, to the begetting and rearing of young and similar things. Whence in the law of the forum thus is described, ‘Natural law is what nature has taught all animals’, and according to this acceptation it does not apply except solely to animals. In the third sense and more strictly speaking natural law is a certain power divinity inspires into man by which he is led to that which is just and equitable, namely to avoid evil and do good.\footnote{111}

This text seems to anticipate the three tiers of ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2. It includes not only the animal and human tiers, but a certain natural law common to all created things, which corresponds to St. Thomas’s notion of “the nature [man] has in common with all substances.”\footnote{112}

c. Decretists: thirteenth century (chiefly Johann the Teuton)

By the thirteenth century, familiar patterns emerge. Several scholars see in the natural law definition of the early thirteenth-century Dominican canonist Johann the Teuton (1180-1252) a model for St. Thomas’s three-tier schema of natural inclinations.\footnote{113} Josef Arntz

\footnote{111} “Est . . . ius naturale in generaliore significacione uis quedam insita omni creature a summa omnium natura, id est a Deo. Quo iure stelle not deserunt cursus suos, aque redeunt ad fontes suos, ad anias attrahitur ferrum et similia. Minus large ius naturale dicitur uis quedam insita omnibus animantibus ex qua procedit quod naturaliter prouocantur ad coitum, ad prolis susceptionem et eius educationem et similia. Unde et in lege forensi sic describitur ‘Ius naturale est quod natura omnia animalia docuit’, et secundum hanc acceptionem non conuenit nisi solis animalibus. In tertia significacione et strictiori dicitur ius naturale uis quedam diuinitas homini inspirata qua ad id quod iustum est et equum ducitur, scilicet ad uitandum malum et faciendum bonum.” Weigand, Naturrechtslehre, paras. 269-271.

\footnote{112} Thus “room is found” for a natural law wider than Ulpian’s that “governs all creation, keeps the stars in their courses, brings waters back to their source, makes the magnet seek the iron.” Crowe, Changing Profile, 99.

\footnote{113} Referring to ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, Aubert writes, “Cette classification rappelle un peu les trois acceptions du ius naturale donnée par Jean le Teutonique dans la glose de Dig. I.7.” Aubert, Le droit romain, 101, n. 1. See also Josef T. Arntz, “Die Entwicklung des Naturrechtlichen Denkens innerhalb des Thomismus,”
claims that Johann “hatte das Naturgesetz mit den inclinationes naturales in Zusammenhang gebracht.” But Johann does not use inclin-terms. Instead, he uses the Ciceronian term vis insita and Isidore’s instinctus to describe the three kinds or levels of nature:

Nature is said in many ways. [In one way] nature is called a power instilled in things [vis insita rebus] by which things generate things similar to themselves. In the second way, nature is called a certain stimulus or instinct of nature from sensuality arising toward the thing to be desired or procreated or educated. In the third way is called the instinct of nature arising out of reason; and the ius arising from such nature is called natural equity; and according to this it is said to be of the natural ius that all things are common, that is, to be shared in time of necessity.

In Michael Crowe’s description, this text is “a mosaic of the current views of the canonists about the natural law.” As in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, in Johann’s text, “[t]he meanings are arranged in a hierarchical order. There is a natural law which is concerned with all beings, one which is limited in its application to animals, and one which takes cognizance of rational beings only.” Johann’s text may well be a model, whether directly or indirectly, for St. Thomas’s three-tiered natural inclination in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2. In any event, according to Lottin, Johann’s triad of natures underlying the natural law “allait bientôt s’infiltrer dans les milieux théologiques.”

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114 Arntz, “Die Entwicklung,” 98; Lottin, Psychologie, 74.
115 See Lottin, Droit naturel, 23, 13-23, 105-111, citing Johann the Teuton (Glossa ordinaria in D. I c. 7, après 1215): “Natura multis modis dicitur. Quandoque dicitur natura uis insita rebus similia de similibus procreans. Secundo modo dicitur natura quidam stimulus seu instinctus nature ex sensualitate procreant iuris ad appendendum uel ad procreandum uel ad educandum. Tertio modo dicitur instinctus nature ex ratione procreant iuris; et ius ex tali natura procreant iuris dictur naturalis equitas; et secundum hoc ius nature dicuntur omnia communia, id est communicanda tempore necessitatis.” Johann adds a fourth sense in terms of the Decalogue: “Quarto modo dicitur ius naturale precepta naturalia, hoc est: non furtum facies, non mechaberis.”
117 Lottin, Psychologie, 74. Notably, Thomas’s contemporary and the greatest of the 13th-century decretists, St. Raymond of Pennafort (b. c. 1175, d. 1275, master general 1238-40) incorporates Johann’s


9. Sacred Scripture

St. Thomas may well have borrowed his NI-language in part from Holy Scripture. In the Vulgate Bible of St. Jerome there are 84 cases of *inclin*-terms—all verbs, in both intransitive and transitive senses.\(^{118}\) In some cases, inclining is metaphorically predicated of God in a corporeal sense. Commenting on the Psalmist’s petition that God “incline” His “ear” (that is, to hear the Psalmist’s prayer), St. Thomas writes,

> And he who hearkens first hears. Thus he says “O incline.” Unless the Lord were in a high place, it would be appropriate that he incline his ear so as to hear he who is in the lowest [place]. The Lord sits in his majesty, and if he wanted us to treat our affairs according to the height of his justice, we would not be saved . . . . Thus, it is appropriate that he incline and then hear: Daniel 9: “Incline, O my God, thy ear, and hear.”\(^{119}\)

Certain scriptural senses of *inclin*—anticipate St. Thomas’s extrinsic, transitive senses of NI-terms. For example, according to Holy Scripture, God “will incline” (*inclinabit*) a man’s heart in whatever direction he (God) chooses.\(^{120}\) But the combination of *inclin*—and *natur*—is not in Scripture. Interestingly, in his commentary on *I Corinthians*, St. Thomas uses

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118 See http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/public/bibles/vulgate.search.html (accessed Sept. 17, 2012). Perhaps the best known is “Inclina, Deus meus, aurem tuam, et audi. . . .” Daniel 9.15-19. Some cases are transitive-extrinsic: e.g., “He bowed the heavens” (“inclinavit caelos”) 2 Kings 22:10. Inclinavit is a translation of ἔκλινεν in the Septuagint. By comparison, the term *appetitus* appears eight times in the Vulgate and *instinctus* is not used at all. See also Blaise Patristic, first two senses: “1. inclino, -are, tr. (cl.) . . . pencher, incliner, abaisser (cl.),” citing *Bib. sac. vulg.*, Ps. 17:10 (“inclinavit caelos et descendit”; *Bib. sac. vulg.* Ps. 9:31 ([réfl.] “se inclinabit et cadet); and “2. (fig.) incliner, pencher, prêter (l'oreille),” citing *Bib. sac. vulg.*, Ps. 16:6, 48:5 (“inclina aurem mihi”).

119 In Ps. 16: “Et qui exaudit primo audit; ideo dicit, Inclina, nisi Dominus sit in alto loco, oportet quod inclinet aurem ad audiendum illum qui est in imo. Dominus sedet in maiestate sua; et si vellet nostra agere secundum altitudinem suae iustitiae, non salvaremur . . . . Et ideo oportet quod inclinet, et tunc exaudiat: Dan. 9: *Inclina domine aurem tuam, et audi.*”

120 In Hebr. [rep. vulg.], cap. 13, lect. 3, 770 [Marietti, 2.505], in quot.: “cor regis in manu domini, quocumque voluerit, inclinabit illud.”
the term *inclinatio naturalis* in connection with St. Paul’s question, “Does not nature itself teach you . . . ?” (*nec ipsa natura docet vos . . .*):

By “nature” he means the “natural inclination” in women to take care of their hair, which is a natural covering, but not in men. This inclination is shown to be natural, because it is found in the majority. But it is taught by nature, because it is a work of God; just as in a picture one is instructed about the skill of the artist.

St. Paul’s characterization of nature as a teacher is strikingly similar to Ulpian’s language, which St. Thomas quotes in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 (*natura omnia animalia docuit*).

10. Theologians

The theological sources of St. Thomas’s natural law thought are too numerous to summarize here. But several possible sources are notable in connection with St. Thomas’s NI-language and the threefold schema of natural inclinations in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

a. St. Augustine

Perhaps even more so than Aristotle, St. Augustine (354-430) is a major source of St. Thomas’s natural law thought. But computer database searches show that Augustine uses *inclin*-terms only infrequently and that he never uses any form of the term *inclinatio*

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122 Whether St. Paul draws this language from Ulpian (or a stoic who influenced Ulpian) is a matter for a separate study.

naturalis. His usage of *inclin-* is usually in a classical sense and never in regard to natural law. In one text, St. Thomas seems to attribute the term *inclinatio naturalis* to St. Augustine, but St. Augustine instead uses only the term *necessitas.*

In one text, however, St. Thomas attributes to St. Augustine the use of the verb *inclinare* in a characteristically patristic sense: “Augustinus dicit, in libro *de Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* [cap. XXI], quod Deus *inclinat voluntates hominum in bonum et malum.*”

Augustine’s actual words in the underlying text are similar, speaking of God “inclining” (*inclinandas*) the will of man withersoever he wishes, either to good or evil. As we shall see below, this “extrinsic” sense of inclining is relevant to St. Thomas’s synthesis of Gratian’s theological definition of the natural law.

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124 There are 14 cases of noun forms of *inclin-* terms in the corpus of St. Augustine’s works, as determined using the Sant Agostino Augustinus Hipponensis search engine at www.sant-agostino.it (last accessed Sept. 9, 2012) (using search term “inclinatio*”). There are, for example, only four cases of *inclin-* terms (including verb forms) in the entire *Confessions.* He uses the term in a physical-spatial sense (e.g., *In Psalmum 87 Enarratio* [vv. 2-3] (“inclinatio auris Dei”) or, figuratively, lowering oneself in humility, *Sermo de symbolo ad catechumenos* 3.6 (“ille se inclinavit”). Philosophically, he speaks of an “inclination of the will to the body” (*inclinatio voluntatis ad corpus*), an inclination of the soul to certain inferior pleasures, and a certain *inclinatio* of the heart. *De genesi ad litteram libri duodecim,* VII, *In quo illud Geneseos,* cap. 2, vers. 7, caput XXV; *De doctrina christiana libri quatuor,* 1.24 (“inclinationes animae ad fruendum inferioribus”); *Conf.* X.36 (“cords inclinatione”). Augustine uses an *inclin-* term in relation to *natura* in only one case: Augustine asks whether the movement that moves a stone is a movement of the stone itself. His interlocutor Evodius replies, in relevant part, “Non equidem nego motum, quo ita ut dicis inclinat urb et ima petit, motum esse lapidis, sed *naturallem.*” *De libero arbitrio,* III.19.

125 *De ver.* q. 22, q. 5 [Leon. 22/3.623:151-52]: “sicut potest accipi ex verbis Augustini, in V de civitate Dei XI cap. duplex est necessitas: necessitas scilicet coactionis, et haec in voluntatem nullo modo cadere potest; et necessitas naturalis inclinationis, sicut dicimus Deum de necessitate vivere: et tali necessitate voluntas aliquid de necessitate vult.” Cf. Augustine *De civ. Dei* V, XI: “Neque enim et vitam Dei et praesicientiam Dei sub necessitate ponimus, si dicamus nesse esse Deum semper vivere et cuncta praescire . . . .” Augustine uses the term *pondus* in a similar way. As Thomas Osborne notes, “In this book [Conf. XIII.9], Augustine describes love as a weight: *Pondus meum amor meus.* Just as weight is the rock’s tendency to fall to the earth, so is love the soul’s tendency to be moved towards God.” Thomas M. Osborne, *Love of Self and Love of God in Thirteenth Century Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2005), 17. According to Osborne, Augustine in this text is explaining his earlier statement that man’s hart remains restless (*inquietum*) until it rests in God. Ibid., citing Conf. I.1.

126 *ST* I-II, q. 79, a. 1 [Leon. 7.76].

127 See Aug., *De grat. et lib. arb.* cap. XXI.43: “His et talibus testimoniis divinorum eloquiorum, quae omnia commemorare nimis longum est, satis, quantum existimo, manifestatur, operari Deum in cordibus hominum ad inclinandas eorum voluntates quocumque voluerit, sive ad bona pro sua misericordia, sive ad mala pro meritis eorum, iudicio utique suo aliquando aperto, aliquando occulto, semper tamen iusto.”
b. Theologians: twelfth and thirteenth centuries

i. Secular masters: Williams of Auvergne and William of Auxerre

The proximate sources of St. Thomas’s NI-vocabulary and three-tiered schema of inclinations may be certain theologians of the high middle ages. An early example of a philosophical use of NI-language occurs in the treatise *De bono et malo* of William of Auvergne (1180-1249). William speaks of a determinate natural inclination of the intellect to truth. But this text does not address natural law.

By comparison, the theologian William of Auxerre (1150-1231) is, according to Lottin, “inspired” by Johann the Teuton’s and Rufinus’s descriptions of natural law to speak of three different natural laws. First, “a certain natural law [ius naturale] is special,” by which he means natural reason. A “certain one is more universal”—i.e., Ulpian’s notion of natural law in common with all animals. The third natural law is “the most universal,” which encompasses all of creation. As a number of scholars have noted, these three natural laws

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128 *De bono et malo*, par. 99: “quemadmodum virtus nostra motiva nobilis est inclinata naturaliter et propendens in Bonum quod est Creator: in alio enim non est possibile ut sit ei quies neque satietas. Sed virtus nostra intellectiva est naturaliter inclinata in Verum et non in verum intentione universali sed in quoddam Verum et in quamdam Veritatem. Non enim potest esse vagus et indeterminatus finis naturalis inclinationis et intentionis similiter neque motus naturalis. Quapropter manifestum est quod intentio naturalis et inclination virtutis nostrae intellectivae est Primum Verum ac luminosissimum sive in primam ac luminosissimam Veritatem, cum quomodum praedixi; nec in alio vero seu veritate quiescere ear nec ab alio impleri lumine scientiae completae eidem possibile sit.” *Guillelmi Alverni episcopi parisiensis opera omnia*, vol. II (Paris 1674), 112-114 (emphasis added).

129 See Lottin, *Psychologie*, 75-76. William of Auxerre is known as one of the first scholastics to incorporate Aristotle into his theology, is also considered the first to incorporate natural law into his theology.

130 “Ius naturale quoddam est speciale, quoddam uniueralsius, quoddam uniuerasillimum. Istud est uniuerasillimum quod est in omnibus rebus, scilicet in concordia omnium rerum; et de tali iustitia naturali agit Plato in Thimeo: unum elementum non potest esse sine alio; unde, ut dicit Augustinus, iudicium diuine largitatis est quod quelibet creatura compellitur dare seipsam. Ius naturale uniueralsius est quod omnia naturalia animalia dictat [sic]. Ius naturale speciale est quod dictat naturalis ratio, et tale ius est in utentibus ratione.” *Summa Aurea in quattuor libros sententiarum a subtilissimo doctore magistro Guillermo Altissiodorensi edita*, Paris, 1500, f. 287v, quoted in Lottin, *Psychologie*, 75, n. 3.
correspond (in reverse order) to the three levels of natural inclination in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a.

2. But William of Auxerre does not use NI-language in this context.

ii. *De lege naturali* (anonymous)

The first use of NI-language in direct connection with natural law in a theological work may be in an anonymous text, *De lege naturali*, written around 1233-34, which considers whether the natural law is a power or a habit. In the context of a question on what kind of a thing the natural law is (*quid sit genere*), the author writes,

> Since in the soul there are power, passions, and habits, it is inquired which of those is the law of nature. It is not power, because power has no inclination; but the law of nature has an inclination.

The author then seems to associate a notion of *impressio* (which he attributes to Augustine) with the inclination of natural law:

> If it is said that the division of these be understood of these things which are in the soul from exterior things, on the contrary: power is not from exterior things. Because that will be said that it is understood of these things which are in the soul, not that are from the soul. Also, Augustine says: the eternal law which is impressed upon us is those things by which it is just that all things be impressed in a most orderly way; but [nothing is] impressed in us except power or habit; therefore it is either power or habit. But [natural law] is not power; since it has an inclination . . . therefore it is habit.

Although *impressio* is mentioned in the same context, the sense of *inclinatio* here seems to be that of an intrinsic, reflexive inclination of the habit. I have not been able to determine

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131 See Elders, *Ethics of St. Thomas*, 212; Crowe, “Ulpian,” 269; Kainz, *Natural Law*, 21. Although Thomas does not differentiate the natural inclinations in terms of degrees of universality, William’s notion that the rational natural law is “special” corresponds to Thomas’s references to the animal level of natural inclination being “more special” (*magis specialia*) and the rational level being “proper to him” (sibi propria).


133 “Cum in anima sint potentie [sic], passiones et habitus, queritur quid istorum est lex nature. Non est potentia; quia potentia nullam habet inclinationem; sed lex nature inclinationem habet.” Lottin, *Psychologie*, 80.

134 “Si dicatur quod diuisci illa intelligitur de his que sunt in anima ab exterioribus, contra: potentia non est de exterioribus. Propter quod dicebatur quod intelligitur de his que sunt in anima, non que sunt ab anima. Item. Augustinus: lex eternea [sic] que nobis impressa est ea est qua iustum est ut omnia ordinatissima sint impressa; sed non est impressum nobis nisi potentia uel habitus; ergo est potentia uel habitus. Sed non est potentia; quia inclinationem habet; quod non potentia; ergo est habitus.” Lottin, *Psychologie*, 80.
whether St. Thomas read this text, but its existence shows, in any event, that the language of *inclinatio* is being used in the context of natural by the early thirteenth century.

**iii. Dominican masters at Paris**

The first Dominican masters at Paris, without using NI-language, continue in the three-layer natural law tradition of Johann the Teuton and William of Auxerre. The Dominican theologian Roland of Cremona, holding the chair of theology in Paris 1229-30, gives a slight variation of William’s account of three natural laws. According to a certain “universal nature,” all things desire to be and desire the good. This universal law, in turn, is specified in three particular laws: of plants (by which foliage and fruit is produced), animals (by which animals of the same kind unite), and man (the more particular law of synderesis, what reason dictates to all men). Roland also gives an alternative three-fold scheme: a “most general” law (the harmony of all things); a “more universal” law (what nature teaches all animals); and a “special” natural law in man only (what reason dictates). As several scholars, note, Roland’s three-tiered gradations of natural law(s) anticipate St. Thomas’s

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136 Quoted in Lottin, *Droit naturel*, 115: “[M]ultiplex ius naturale. Est enim quoddam ius siue quoddam natura uniuersalis, secundum quod dicitur quod omnia naturaliter appetunt esse siue bonum; talis appetitus est natura uniuersalis et ius naturae uniuer sale; et hoc est in omnibus creaturis; et fortasse istud ius siue ista natura exit a specie, modo et ordine, de quibus sat is dictum est in fine secundi libri. Et est quoddam alia natura siue ius speciale quod est in vegetalibus: de iure enim vegetalium speciale est quod producant folia et cooperimentum fructuum, sicut dicit Aristoteles in libro de arboribus et plantis et uitiibus. . . . Est alius ius speciale magis in animalibus quo unumquodque animal coniungitur ad sibi simile, sicut dicit Boetius; et quoddam alia iura sunt specialia in animalibus siue naturae ut quod aranea texit ut capiat muscas quas comedat. Et est ius magis speciale, ut sind eresis in homine. Alii ita distinguunt quod est quoddam ius generalissimum, ut concordia omnium rerum, et dicunt quod de tali concordia agit Plato in Thimeo; unde Augustinus dict: iudicium diuine largitionis est quod quelibet creatura compellitur dare <seipsam>. Ius naturale <universalis> est illud quod natura docet omnia animalia>. Ius autem naturale speciale est quod ratio dictat et tale ius est in solis utentibus ratione.”

137 Ibid.
table of natural inclinations in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2.\(^{138}\)

Roland does not use *inclin*-language, but the resemblance to St. Thomas’s three-fold schema in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 here becomes increasingly detailed in some respects. Roland’s universal nature seems to correspond to the first principle of practical reason for St. Thomas, which is the good.\(^{139}\) With respect to the second tier, St. Thomas also uses the phrase *magis specialis*. Roland’s special natural law for man corresponds to St. Thomas’s notion that there is in man a natural inclination to act in accord with reason.

iv. Franciscan school

The influence of the “Franciscan School” on St. Thomas’s account of law in general is well established.\(^{140}\) The *Summa Halensis*, originally attributed to Alexander of Hales (d. 1245), emphasizes an Augustinian notion of divine governance through eternal law, on which the natural law depends.\(^{141}\) As Michael Crowe observes, in this account (which is similar to the approaches of Johann the Teuton, William of Auxerre, and Roland of Cremona), there are three kinds of natural law: “the natural law limited to rational creation (Rom. 2:14), the natural law common to man and animal (Ulpian), and the natural law that embraces all

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\(^{138}\) For discussion of Roland’s 3-level natural law and a partial translation of the text quoted above, see Jean Porter, “Universally Valid Morality,” 66; and *Nature as Reason*, 70. See also Crowe, “Ulpian,” 269.

\(^{139}\) *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “primum principium in ratione practica est quod fundatur supra rationem boni, quae est, bonum est quod omnia appetunt.”

\(^{140}\) See, e.g., Ignatius Brady, “Law in the *Summa fratris Alexandri,*” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* (1950): 133-147; Chroust, “Historical Precursors,” 14. The Franciscan masters at Paris first emphasized eternal law, on which, for Thomas as well, the natural law entirely depends. See Lottin, *Psychologie*, 52-63. The *Summa Halensis*, part of which comprises one of the first theological “treatises” on law, anticipates the basic structure of Thomas’s treatise on law. As in St. Thomas’s treatise on law, the Alexandrine *Summa*’s legal tract severally addresses eternal law, natural law, human law, and divine positive law. See J. Tonneau, “The Teaching of the Thomist Tract on Law,” *The Thomist* 34 (1970): 23. The Summa Halensis, also known as the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, was previously attributed to Alexander of Hales, the legal tractate (Book III) of this *summa* is now attributed to Alexander’s brother Franciscan John of La Rochelle. See Crowe, “Ulpian,” 269.

creation.” But, here again, the *Summa Halensis* does not use *inclin*-language in this context and the laws are listed as distinct laws, not, as for St. Thomas, a unified natural law with multiple precepts.

Anton Chroust identifies an anonymous manuscript of the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition which uses *inclin*-terms in a discussion of natural law considered as a habit of the rational soul. Because irrational souls act “of necessity” (*ex necessitate*), and therefore cannot err, they “need no other inclination or determination” (*non indiget altera inclinatione vel determinatione*). But because the rational creature acts freely, and can easily err, it needs the determination of another, i.e., of a habit which is a “disposition determining and inclining the [soul’s] power to acts of its own kind” (*dispositio potentiam ad actum sui generis determinans et inclinans*). This text implies a natural inclination in irrational creatures, but a habitual inclination in man. This habit, however, seems to be innate: “God the creator of nature naturally instilled in the intellect the habit” (*deus creator naturae naturaliter indidit intellectui habitum*).

Finally, St. Bonaventure, although he does not use *inclin-* in his description of the various senses of natural law, does elsewhere speak of *synderesis* as a “weight (*pondus*)

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142 Crowe, *Changing Profile*, 118.
directing and inclining (inclinans) to the good.”\textsuperscript{144}

\textbf{v. St. Albert the Great: font of NI-language?}

It seems likely that St. Thomas’s immediate source of NI-language is St. Albert the Great. Albert uses inclin-language frequently in many contexts, including with respect to the will and synderesis.\textsuperscript{145} Commenting on Aristotle’s doctrine that the good is what all things desire, he says that natural appetite (appetitus naturalis) is “nothing else than aptitude and inclination (inclinatio) of what is in potency, to perfection.”\textsuperscript{146} The order of a nature is an inclination to the due end of that thing’s nature.\textsuperscript{147} In his core discussions of ius naturale, Albert uses the term instinctus, by which he means an innate force of man’s rational nature in the sense of Cicero’s innata vis.\textsuperscript{148} Although NI-terms are not central to his account of natural law, in one text (\textit{De bono}, V, q. 2, a. 3, ad 3), he discusses the natural law (lex

\textsuperscript{144} Bon. \textit{In IV Sent.}, d. 33, q. 13: “[S]icut in parte animae cognitivae est quodam naturale iudicatorium, quod quidem est conscientia, ita in parte animae affectiva erit pondus ad bonum dirigens et inclinans; hoc autem non est nisi synderesis.” See Oscar J. Brown, \textit{Natural Rectitude and Divine Law in Aquinas} (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1981), 59-60; Flückiger, \textit{Geschichte des Naturrechtes}, 428. St. Bonaventure has no free-standing discussion of natural law, but he says \textit{ius naturale} is said in three ways: communiter (Gratian); propri (Isidore’s definition of natural law as “quod est commune omnium nationum; et hoc ius est, quod dictat ratio recta”; and propriissime (Ulpian).

\textsuperscript{145} Albertus Magnus, \textit{Isagoge in Libros De Anima} (Vives), ch. XXXIII, 535-536, e.g., “voluntas naturalis est vis movens et inclinans ad bonum substantia naturae”; \textit{Summa de creaturis}, II, q. 72, a. 1 [\textit{Opera omnia}, ed. Borgnet, t. 35, 599]: “synderesis, cujus est inclinare in bonum per universales rationes boni.” Cf. Thomas, \textit{De ver.}, q. 16, a. 1, ad 7 [Leon. 22/2.505:313-18]: “synderesis ex habitu aliquo naturali habet quod semper ad bonum inclinet.”

\textsuperscript{146} De bono, tr. 1, q. 1, art. 1, ad 1 [\textit{Opera Omnia.}, vol. 28, ed. Bernhard Geyer and Wilhelm Kubel (Monasterium Westfalorum: Aschendorf, 1951, 4)” (“Et est appetitus naturalis, qui nihil alius est, quam aptitudo et inclinatio eius quod est in potentia, ad perfectionem; et ille est in omnibus et de hoc intelligitur, quod dicitur, quod bonum est, quod omnia appertinunt, sicut dicit Philosophus in fine I Physicorum, quod materia appertit formam sicut femina masculum et turpe bonum”); ibid., 5, ad. 3 (“quod licet appetens inquantum appetens non habeat rationem boni perfecti, non tamen absolvitur a ratione boni, immo secundum Boethium De hebdomadibus ipsum est bonum ex ordine et inclinatione ad bonum”); ibid., 6, ad 8 (“potentia, secundum quod est inclinata ad actum”).

\textsuperscript{147} De \textit{nat. boni}, tr. 1, pars 1, n. 2 [\textit{Opera Omnia}, Aschendorff, vol. 25/1, 1:29-41]: “talia (scil. bonum naturae sive ordo) sunt omnia creata quae deus bonus creavit et ad seipsum et ad gloriam suam ordinavit. … Hanc bonitatem dividit Augustinus in modum, speciem et ordinem. Modus autem est limes naturae uniuscuiusque, qui scilicet limes omni creato secundum suam essentiam finem praefigit, ne immoderate excidendo modum turpe videatur. Species autem est forma et perfectio rei in sua natura. Ordo vero est inclinatio ad debitum naturae suae finem.”

\textsuperscript{148} De \textit{bono}, V, q. 1, a. 1, ad 19, ad 21 [\textit{Opera omnia}, Aschendorff, vol. 28].
naturalis) in terms of natural inclination. Specifically, he says that the natural law (lex naturalis) is an “inclining nature” (inclinans natura) and that the “law of nature inclines” (lex naturae inclinat) man towards the common good. The context is a discussion of “in what way the natural law differs from the law of Christ and Moses” (in quo differt lex naturalis a lege Christi et Moysi).

St. Albert considers this objection regarding the number of penalties in relation to the number of types of law. My concern is not the theological question at issue, but instead the specific sense in which St. Albert uses NI-terms. In his response to the objection, when he says “inclinating nature” (inclinans natura) or the “law of nature” (lex naturalis), Albert is not referring to a three-fold inclination comprising substance and animality and rationality. Instead he means the inclination of the “power which regards universal [principles] of ius, and this is synderesis, in which is the natural law” (potentia respiciens universalia iuris, et haec est synderesis, in qua est lex naturalis).

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150 De bono, V, q. 2 [Opera Omnia, Aschendorff, vol. 28, 289].


152 The text of his response to the foregoing objection, ibid., ad 3 [Opera Omnia, Aschendorff, 288:6-76], in relevant part, is as follows: “penes quid accipitur multiplicatio legum, dicendum, quod multis modis potest accipi divisio legum, penes moventia ad opus vel penes potentialia, quae moventur ad opus, vel penes intentiones legum. Si penes moventia ad opus, aut secundum terminum, ad quem est motus ex intentione legis, aut secundum terminum, a quo est motus. Si primo modo, aut est inclinans natura aut gratia aut peccatum. Si natura, est lex naturalis, si secundo modo, est lex gratiae, si tertio modo, est lex peccati sive membrorum. Si autem est secundum terminum a quo, tunc est lex timoris, quae semper facit fugere. Si vero accipitur divisio penes potentialia, quae moventur ad opus, aut erit potentia respiciens universalia iuris, et haec est synderesis, in qua est lex naturalis. Proprete quod dicitur lex conscientiae, quia . . . conscientia est conclusio cuiusdam syllogismi, cuius maior propositio est synderesis et minor rationis. Proptererea autem, quia concreata est nobis, dicitur ‘uxor adolescetiae nostrae,’ quia de latere nostro in corde formata est nobis in adiutorium procurationis
from the jurists’ and canonists’ practice of listing several types or layers of “natural laws”
and instead insists that natural law pertains to rational nature only.\(^{153}\) He rejects Ulpian’s
definition outright and instead embraces Cicero’s definition of law as an innate force (\textit{innata vis}), which Albert takes to mean the “light” of the agent intellect.\(^{154}\) His usage of NI-terms,
far from describing animal urges, corresponds to his emphasis on rational nature. In the text
cited above (\textit{De bono}, V, q. 2, a. 3, ad 3), he describes natural law in terms of synderesis and
the inclination of reason to the good.\(^{155}\) For example, he associates the “naturally just thing”
\textit{(justum naturale)} with potency, where potency is understood as an “inclination of the rational
nature” \textit{(inclinatio ex natura rationali)}.\(^{156}\) But St. Thomas’s NI doctrine in \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 2
is hardly reducible to Albert’s NI-language, or to Albert’s natural law doctrine otherwise.

\(^{153}\) Elders, \textit{Ethics of Thomas}, 208: “Albert the Great underlines the rational character of the natural law,
defining it as the knowledge of how to act which is given us according to the nature of our reason.” See \textit{De bono} V, q. 1, a. 2: “\textit{Ius naturale est lumen morum impressum nobis secundum naturam rationis.}” Against
Ulpian, Albert upheld that the knowledge of natural law is exclusive to man. See \textit{De bono}, q. 1 a. 3: “\textit{Ius
naturale nihil aliud est quam ius rationis sive debitum secundum quod natura est ratio.” See Elder, \textit{Ethics of
Thomas}, 209.

\(^{154}\) Albert makes no attempt to reconcile Ulpian’s definition with his own understanding of natural law
as reason. See Cunningham, \textit{Reclaiming Moral Agency}, 121 (Albert rejects Ulpian outright). Commenting on
Cicero’s “\textit{quaedam innata vis},” Albert insists that the nature in question is only the rational nature of man. See
\textit{De bono}, V, q. 1, a. 1, 12.

\(^{155}\) \textit{De bono}, V, q. 2, a. 3, ad 3m, lines 13-14, 43 [\textit{Opera Omnia}, Aschendorff, vol. 28, 289:33-45].

\(^{156}\) \textit{Ethica} V, tract. III, cap. III, q. 3: “\textit{Sic ergo intelligitur, quod justum naturale ubique eadem habet
potentiam, et quod non consistit in videri vel non videri. Potentiam autem dicimus, primam inclinationem ex
natura rationali, et non illam quae accipitur in effectu.”
B. *Inclinatio naturalis*: Linchpin of Discordant Tradition?

A review of the tradition discloses no “smoking gun.” That is, no single text, author, or translation provides the precise NI-language or a precise “template” for St. Thomas’s threefold schema of natural inclination in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2. Why then does St. Thomas use the term *inclinatio naturalis* in his account of the precepts of the natural law? Oscar Brown claims St. Thomas used “the inherited legal rubrics of tradition” and that “his only lexicological ‘innovations’ consisted in the wholly negative measure of occasional silence or reserve.” Yet, as the absence of natural inclination in the natural law tradition implies, St. Thomas’s use of *inclin-*language in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, and throughout the treatise on law, is a noteworthy innovation in the vocabulary of the natural law tradition. But why does St. Thomas use NI-terms instead of a more traditional natural law term, such as Isidore’s *instinctus* or Cicero’s *vis innata*? The natural law literature provides very little speculation on this point and, indeed, the question is rarely asked.

1. Status quaestions

Numerous scholars acknowledge that St. Thomas achieves a synthesis of competing definitions of natural law. The difficulty for St. Thomas, as the scholastic synthesizer *sans pareil*, is that many of these received, seemingly conflicting, definitions are in some way authoritative. How does he harmonize these divergent *auctoritates*? His early effort at a synthesis confuses the modern reader. In his *Sentences* commentary, St. Thomas confronts

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157 Brown, *Natural Rectitude*, 42.
158 As Jean Porter notes, the scholastic natural law thinker’s signature task is to harmonize “different and seemingly incompatible definitions of natural law.” Porter, “Universally Valid Morality,” 63. Indeed, by Thomas’s day, civilians, canonists, and theologians had compiled lists of up to seven meanings of natural law. Huguccio gives seven meanings, prefaced with, “lest the mind of some idiot be confused, I will diligently explain them all” (“Sed ne ydiote animus in hoc confundantur, de quolibet diligenter assignabimus”), quoted in Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights*, 61.
the question of whether polygamy is contrary to the natural law. The test he applies is this: “whatever renders an action improportionate to the end which nature intends to obtain by a certain work is said to be contrary to the natural law.”

Marriage has two natural ends: begetting and rearing children and “the community of works that are a necessity of life.” Polygamy, he reasons, is not improportionate to the first end “since one man is sufficient to get children of several wives, and to rear the children born of them.” But it “hinders greatly” (multum impedit) the second end. Therefore, one expects St. Thomas to conclude, polygamy is contrary to the natural law. But instead he offers an equivocal conclusion: “It is therefore evident from what has been said that plurality of wives is in a way against the law of nature, and in a way not against it.”

My concern is not the morality of polygamy as such, but rather St. Thomas’s handling of a key objection which shows that several conflicting definitions of natural law are looming in the background. The objection is this:

[N]atural law is what nature has taught all animals, as is said in the beginning of the Digest. But nature has not taught all animals that they must be monogamous; since, in many animals, one male is joined to many females. Therefore it is not against the law of nature to have many wives.

This objection poses a dilemma for St. Thomas: must he disavow the authoritative text of the Digest? At the same time, it presents an opportunity for synthesis. In reply, he notes that

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159 _In IV Sent._, d. 33, q. 1, a. 1: “Omne autem illud quod actionem inconvenientem reddit fini quem natura ex opere aliquo intendit, contra legem naturae esse dicitur.”

160 Ibid.: “communicatio operum quae sunt necessaria in vita.” For believers, there is a third end, the sacramental good of marriage as signifying the unity of Christ and his Church. Polygamy completely destroys this good.

161 Ibid.: “unus vir sufficiat pluribus uxoribus fecundandis, et educandis filiis ex eis natis.”

162 Ibid.: “ideo patet ex dictis quod pluralitas uxorum quodammodo est contra legem naturae, et quodammodo non.”

163 _In IV Sent._, d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, arg. 4 [Parma 7/2.966]: “jus naturale est quod natura omnia animalia docuit, ut in principio Digestorum dicitur. Sed natura non docuit hoc omnia animalia, quod sit una unius; cum unum mas in multis animalibus, pluribus feminis conjungatur. Ergo non est contra legem naturae habere plures uxorres.”
“natural right has several significations” and then identifies three definitions of natural law (ius naturale) that loom large in the tradition, namely those of Cicero, Gratian, and Ulpian. Which definition does St. Thomas choose? He retains all of the above, each

secundum quid:

Accordingly plurality of wives, though not contrary to natural right taken in [Ulpian’s] sense, is nevertheless against natural right taken in [Gratian’s] sense, because it is forbidden by the Divine law. It is also against natural right taken in [Cicero’s] sense, as appears from what has been said, for such is nature’s dictate to every animal according to the mode befitting its species. Whence also certain animals, in which the education of young requires the care of both, namely male and female, by natural instinct they preserve the union of one to one, as is clear in the turtledove and the dove and things of such kind.

But is polygamy against the natural law for man or not? Or are the various definitions of natural law simply incommensurable?

This text is best interpreted in terms of St. Thomas’s understanding of nature and natural inclination. In the corpus of the article, St. Thomas distinguishes between man’s

164 In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968]: “jus naturale multipliciter accipitur. Primo enim jus aliquod dicitur naturale ex principio, quia a natura est inditum; et sic definit Tullius in 2 rhetoricorum, dicens: jus naturae est quod non opinio genuit, sed quaedam innata vis inseruit. Et quia etiam in rebus naturalibus dicitur aliqui motus naturales, non quia sint ex principio intrinsecos, sed quia sunt a principio superiori movente, sicut motus qui sunt in elementis ex impressione corporum caelestium, naturales dicitur, ut Commentator dicit in 3 caeli et mundi; ideo ea quae sunt de jure divino, dicitur esse de jure naturali, cum sint ex impressione et infusione superioris principiorum, scilicet Dei; et sic accipitur ab Isidoro, qui dicit, quod jus naturale est quod in lege et in Evangelio continetur. Tertio dicitur jus naturale non solum a principio, sed a natura, quia de naturalibus est. Et quia natura contra rationem dividitur, a qua homo est homo; ideo strictissimo modo accipiendo jus naturale, illa quae ad homines tantum pertinent, etsi sint de dictamine rationis naturalis, non dicitur esse de jure naturali: sed illa tantum quae naturalis ratio dictat de his quae sunt homini alisque communia; et sic datur dicta definitio, scilicet: jus naturale est quod natura omnia animalia docuit.”

165 Ibid.: “Pluralitas ergo uxorum quamvis non sit contra jus naturale tertio modo acceptum, est tamen contra jus naturale secundo modo acceptum, quia jure divino prohibetur; et etiam contra jus naturale primo modo acceptum, ut ex dictis patet, quod natura dictat animali cuilibet secundum modum convenientem suae speciei; unde etiam quaedam animalia, in quibus ad educationem proles requiritur sollicitudo utrisque, scilicet maris et feminae, naturali instinctu servant conjunctionem unius ad unum, siccat patet in turtura et columna, et hujusmodi.” Ibid.

166 Thomas’s response must be considered in the context of the question, which is whether plurality of wives is against the natural law. All nine of the objections hold that it is not against the natural law. Thomas’s task, then, consistent with his method, is to vindicate the opposite position—that polygamy is indeed contrary to the natural law—and, as best as can be, to harmonize the objections.
generic nature and his specific nature.\textsuperscript{167} In things that lack reason, the principle of action “is the form itself, whence their proper actions proceed proportionately to their end.”\textsuperscript{168}

Analogously, in the rational creature, the principles of action are knowledge and appetite:

“Hence in the cognitive power there needs to be a natural concept, and in the appetitive power a \textit{natural inclination}, whereby the action befitting the genus or species is rendered proportionate to the end.”\textsuperscript{169} In this analysis, the natural law is “nothing else than a concept naturally instilled into man, whereby he is guided to act in a befitting manner in his proper actions, whether . . . by virtue of his generic nature, as, for instance, to beget, to eat, and so on, or . . . by virtue of his specific nature, as, for instance, to reason and so forth.”\textsuperscript{170} Because the begetting and rearing of children is “competent to man according to his generic nature,” it is common to both man and other animals. But the secondary end of marriage is, for human beings alone, “the community of works that are a necessity of life.”\textsuperscript{171} Accordingly, as St. Thomas then concludes, “the first end corresponds to the marriage of man inasmuch as he is an animal: the second, inasmuch as he is a man.”\textsuperscript{172} Man’s “natural inclination” is by no

\textsuperscript{167} He draws an analogy: “it belongs to a magnet to be borne downwards by virtue of its generic nature, and to attract iron by virtue of its specific nature.” \textit{In IV Sent.}, d. 33, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.967]: “omnibus rebus naturaliter insunt quaedam principia quibus non solum operationes proprias efficere possunt, sed quibus etiam eas convenientes fini suo reddant; sive sint actiones quae consequantur rem aliqiu ex natura sui generis, sive consequantur ex natura speciei: ut magneti competit ferri deorsum ex natura sui generis, et attahere ferrum ex natura speciei.”

\textsuperscript{168} Ibid.: “in rebus agentibus ex necessitate naturae sunt principia actionum ipsae formae, a quibus operationes propriae prodeunt convenientes fini.”

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid.: “unde oportet quod in vi cognoscitiva sit naturalis conceptio, et in vi appetitiva naturalis inclinatio, quibus operatio conveniens generi sive speciei reddatur competens fini.”

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid.: “Lex ergo naturalis nihil est aliud quam conceptio homini naturaliter indita, qua dirigitur ad convenienter agendum in actionibus propriis, sive competant ei ex natura generis, ut generare, comedere, et hujusmodi; sive ex natura speciei, ut ratiocinari, et simulia.”

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid.: “communicatio operum quae sunt necessaria in vita.” For believers, there is a third end, the sacramental good of marriage as signifying the unity of Christ and his Church. Polygamy completely destroys this good.

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.: “primus finis respondet matrimonio hominis inquantum est animal; secundus, inquantum est homo.”
means limited to his animality. His natural inclination as a rational creature specifies and
takes precedence over his animal inclination. Thus, having a plurality of wives is “not
against” the natural law only if natural law is considered at the generic level in Ulpian’s sense
which, as St. Thomas describes it, is the strictest (i.e., narrowest) sense in that it is trumped
by the broader law that encompasses man’s rational nature.

Thus, St. Thomas here already begins to incorporate a concept of natural inclination
into his natural law doctrine as a means of reconciling two basic approaches to natural law,
one based on man’s specific nature, the other on man’s generic nature. The three layers of the
natural law described in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 are present in an inchoate way, although not
presented as such. But this early deployment of an NI-concept falls far short of the fully
integrated account of natural inclinations of man in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 in several respects. For
one, St. Thomas does not distinctly set forth a three-fold inclination of man as a composite
nature. Also, inclinatio naturalis, following upon cognitio naturalis, in this early text, sounds
more like the rational natural inclination of St. Albert than the later, familiar multi-layer
inclination of the St. Thomas of ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2. Natural inclination here is something that
apparently follows upon a natural conception in the intellect and thus seems to be a rational
inclination, i.e., a tending of the will based upon a good apprehended by reason. But if
natural inclination is essentially intellectual-psychological, how then can Ulpian’s “natural
law,” conceived in terms of animal instinct, still be called “law” in a manner consistent with
natural law understood as “nothing other than a concept naturally instilled” in man? Also,
what has natural inclination, understood as the tendency of the appetitive power, to do with

\[173\] Broad and narrow are of course relative terms. In one sense, the generic nature is broader because it
encompasses many species.
Gratian’s natural law, conceived as a “higher moving principle”? St. Thomas seems to have pushed Gratian’s awkwardly theological definition to the margin of the discussion, which now seems to focus on some sort of intrinsic, natural, and specifically rational principle.

Putting aside the particular issue of polygamy, consider, as we have seen, St. Thomas’s integrated account of natural inclination in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2. The first principle of practical reason is the good as an object of appetite. Following from this principle, the first precept of law is that “good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided.” All the other precepts of the natural law flow from this first precept, so that

Since . . . good has the nature of an end, and evil, the nature of a contrary, hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance. Wherefore according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law.

As we saw in the Introduction, in man, there is a threefold order of natural inclination in accordance with the three levels of his nature: (1) the nature he has in common with all substances, (2) the nature he has in common with all animals, and (3) the nature proper to him as a rational being.

Scholars duly note that his threefold schema of natural inclinations in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 plays an important role in St. Thomas’s synthesis of the conflicting natural law auctoritates. Joseph Arntz suggests that the natural inclinations have a clear role in the

174 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “bonum est faciendum et prosequendum, et malum vitandum.”
175 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “Quia . . . bonum habet rationem finis, malum autem rationem contrarii, inde est quod omnia illa ad quae homo habet naturalem inclinationem, ratio naturaliter apprehendit ut bona, et per consequens ut opere prosequenda, et contraria eorum ut mala et vitanda. Secundum igitur ordinem inclinationum naturalium, est ordo praeceptorum legis naturae.”
176 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]. See Introduction for the full text.
177 Anselm Gunthör observes that Thomas, in 94.2, successfully harmonizes a “breiten Palette von Definitionen des natürlichen Sittengesetzes und damit der menschlichen Natur selbst.” Anselm Gunthör,
“grand synthesis” whereby St. Thomas unites the different natural law accounts of his predecessors and contemporaries.\textsuperscript{178} Jean Porter points out that the precise question presented in \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 2, whether the natural law contains multiple precepts, or only one precept, is unprecedented. It is, rather, St. Thomas’s novel approach to a standard, similar question: “whether there are many laws of nature, or only one.”\textsuperscript{179} Instead of being content to list the various versions of natural law, or to choose a favorite among the authoritative definitions, St. Thomas undertakes to show “the rational unity of the natural law through an analysis of the ways in which diverse precepts of the natural law may be said to be expressions of one fundamental precept, directed at the most general end of action, namely, the good itself.”\textsuperscript{180}

Porter specifically suggests that St. Thomas’s first principle is a variant of the canonist Huguccio’s definition of the natural law as a “rational power of discriminating good and evil” which, Porter notes, was “subsequently widely adopted.”\textsuperscript{181} From this starting point, St. Thomas proceeded to harmonize the natural law definitions of Ulpian, Gratian, and Cicero, as well as that of Roland of Cremona. The framework for this synthesis, as Porter acknowledges, is “his taxonomy of human inclinations towards the good.”\textsuperscript{182} The first inclination accounts for the universal tendency to being and the good, mentioned by Roland.

\begin{itemize}
\item Thomas combines the schema of the canonist Johann the Teuton—whom Arntz credits with having brough natural law together with the three levels of natural inclinations—with William of Auxerre’s notion of three distinct natural laws (special, more universal, and most universal). Because man has both animal and rational inclinations, Ulpian’s animalist natural law could be reconciled with William of Auxerre’s notion of a rational natural law (\textit{ius naturale speciale}). Joseph T. Arntz, “Die Entwicklung,” 98, citing Lottin, \textit{Psychologie}, 74.
\item Porter, “Universally Valid Morality,” 63.
\item Ibid., 70. In Thomas’s words, “omnia ipsa praecepta legis naturae, inquantum referuntur ad unum primum praeceptum, habent rationem unius legis naturalis.” \textit{ST} I-II, 94, a. 2, ad 1 [Leon. 7.170].
\end{itemize}
The second inclination brings Ulpian into the fold. The third level comprises the “distinctively human inclinations to live together and to engage in intellectual activity, which were central to Cicero’s conception of the natural law and were subsequently incorporated into scholastic reflection by early canonical commentators on Gratian’s Decretum.”

Thus, Porter concludes, St. Thomas “argues for the unity of the natural law by analyzing it in terms of the complex yet rationally comprehensible causal tendencies exhibited by the human person as a creature and an animal of a distinctive kind.”

2. But Why Inclinatio?

Arntz’s and Porter’s analyses seem sound, as far as they go, but neither attempts to explain why St. Thomas uses the precise language and concept of inclinatio in this context. In fact, the few scholars who acknowledge that St. Thomas’s NI-language is an innovation account for it only in a desultory fashion. Robert Greene, for one, suggests that St. Thomas substitutes inclinatio naturae for Isidore’s instinctus naturae in his discussions of the natural law because “inclinatio . . . did not preclude, as instinctus did, the exercise of the discursive reason and free choice required by any moral law.”

Greene adds that the broader term inclinatio helped St. Thomas solve a “problem” posed by Isidore’s introduction of instinctus naturae into Ulpian’s definition of natural law: “How was the natural law to be defined in relation to those appetitive and self-preservative urges that man seemed to share with animals?”

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183 Ibid.
184 Ibid., 68.
186 Greene, “Instinct of Nature,” 175. Greene asks, “[Is] natural law an oxymoron, yoking together in apparent harmony the opposing forces of nature and reason?” Ibid. Similarly, Michel Therrien and R. D. Lumb are at pains to distinguish natural instinct from natural inclination. Thomas “assumes a distinction between instinct and inclination. A natural instinct is not an inclination toward some end, but the cause of an irrational
St. Isidore’s use of *instinctus* in connection with Ulpian’s definition gives Greene’s theory some initial plausibility. But both Greene seems to read *instinctus* as corresponding to “instinct” in the narrow modern sense. If *instinctus* in medieval Latin meant “instinct” in the modern, Darwinian sense, they might be correct, but the *instinctus* used in the canonists’ natural law definitions has nearly the opposite meaning and, in any event, *instinctus* is the traditional term of choice for natural law as rational capacity.187

3. The linchpin: *inclinatio naturalis*

The concept and precise signification of *inclinatio* arguably provide a critical thread in accomplishing St. Thomas’s synthesis in three ways: (1) inclining, in the extrinsic, transitive sense of God inclining human nature, accounts for Gratian’s theological understanding of natural law; (2) the single term *inclinatio* accounts for Cicero’s understanding of natural law as an “innate power inserted” and clarifies that this power is not a psychological power, but instead an ontological tendency of the rational creature towards a determinate end, God; and (3) *inclinatio*, which is said of man analogously as substance, animal, and intellect, accounts for Ulpian’s notion of natural law as that which is common to man and other animals within the larger whole of human nature.

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187 Thomas, and many of his predecessors, just as often use *instinctus* to describe the tendency of natural reason in relation to natural law. *Instinct-*, a term frequently used in the natural law tradition, appears only five times in the treatise on law, the only one of which that directly pertains to natural law is in an objection: *ST* I-II, q. 100, a. 1, arg. 1 [Leon. 7.206]. The other cases are as follows: *ST* I-II, q. 100, a. 11, ad 2 [Leon. 7.221] (in relation to an objection about the judicial and ceremonial precepts); q. 108, a. 1 and ad 2 [Leon. 7.283-84] (“instinctus gratiae”); and q. 103 a. 1 (“credendum est quod ex instinctu divino”).
a. Divine inclining: Gratian and the decretists

For Gratian, as discussed above, natural law is identified with revealed law. Although Gratian himself does not give a philosophical explanation of the relationship between God and nature, the decretists address this problem by equating God with nature, using expressions such as *summa natura* and *natura, id est deus*.  

Theologians, correspondingly, speak of God as *natura naturans*. Although St. Thomas uses nature-terms to describe God in certain contexts, he does not usually speak in this way in the context of natural law. Rather, he focuses on the meaning of “natural.” Just as the elemental motions caused by celestial bodies, which are superior motive principles, are called natural, likewise the divine law is called natural because it is “from the impression [*ex impressione*] and infusion of a superior principle, namely God.” In any event, “nature” and “the natural” remain at the plane of the creature, though clearly caused by God. St. Thomas thus distinguishes between God as creator and immanent nature.

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188 This is not understood in a pantheistic sense. See note 191 above.
189 On thirteenth-century use of *natura naturans* as meaning creator, see Porter, *Natural and Divine Law*, 75. For the origins of *natura summa, natura naturans*, and *natura universalis* in Augustine and John Scotus Eriugena, and Averroes, see Delhaye, *Permanence*, 11.
190 Thomas uses *natura naturans* twice. See *ST* I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116]; *De div. nom.* cap. 4, lect. 21, n. 550 [Marietti 206]. On the origins of the term *natura naturans*, see the Marietti edition of *In De div. nom.*, 206, n. 1. The notion of the “divine nature” (i.e., of Christ, in distinction from his human nature) is not of concern in this context. In various contexts, Thomas does use certain seemingly equivalent formulations, referring to God, considered as the creator, as, variously, *natura summa* (*SCG* III, cap. 47, n. 6 [Leon. 14.128]), *natura primaeva* (*SCG* III, cap. 97, n. 11, in quot. from Boet. [Leon. 14.300]), and *natura universalissima* (*De pot.*, q. 6, a. 1, ad 1 [Marietti 155-60]).
191 In *IV Sent.*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968]: “*ex impressione et infusione superioris principii, scilicet Dei.*” The analogy between the naturalness of elemental motions caused by celestial bodie and that of human nature caused by God is surprising because the motions caused by celestial bodies often contrary to the natural inclination of thing so moved. Tidal motion, for example, is caused by universal nature contrary to the natural downward motion of water. See *Comp. theol.* I, cap. 136 [Leon. 42.133:51-52]; *In Rom.*, cap. 11, lect. 3, n. 910 [Marietti, 169]. Cf. *De motu cordis* [Leon. 43.127:36-42] (contrasts tidal motion with the motion of the heart, which “does not result from a separate cause but from an intrinsic principle”).
The critical term in St. Thomas’s explanation here is *impressio*. In the *Sentences* commentary, although St. Thomas explains his position on polygamy partly in terms of natural inclination (in the sense of an intrinsic tendency in the appetitive power towards what is fitting for man’s natural ends), he does not directly link the notion of *inclinatio* with the divine *impressio* of the natural law on the creature. But in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 and other *inclin-*texts in the treatise on law, if those texts are viewed in terms of St. Thomas’s use of *inclin-*language throughout the corpus, the link becomes clear. For St. Thomas, *inclinatio naturalis* has (to borrow Seckler’s description of *instinctus*) a *Doppelcharakter*: it is both the reflexive self-inclination of nature as an intrinsic principle of motion and an extrinsic-transitive inclining by another agent, namely God. The existence and motion of nature depend on God, understood as a higher, “first” principle, which impresses the natural law through creation. This impression is not a violent or heteronomic “imposition” upon an already-constituted nature. Rather, the impression is, in effect, the very form of the thing. In this sense, the inclination of nature is “divine”: “all things have in themselves something divine, that is, an inclination of nature, which is derived from the first principle, or even their (substantial) form itself which is the basis of the inclination.”

In the treatise on law, St. Thomas provides a well developed account of the relationship between natural law and God. All things are “ruled and measured” by the Eternal Law. Natural law is “the participation of the rational creature in the eternal law.” All things “partake” of the eternal law, insofar as “from its being imprinted on them, they derive

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192 *In VII Ethic.*, lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433.160-68]: “omnia habent naturaliter in se ipsis quiddam divinum, scilicet inclinationem naturae, quae dependet ex principio primo; vel etiam ipsam formam, quae est huius inclinationis principium.”

193 *ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154]: “participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura.”
their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends.”

It is by man’s participation in the “eternal reason” (ratio aeterna) that man “has a natural inclination to his proper act and end.” The “light of natural reason” is an “imprint” (impressio) on man of the divine light. It appears then that the divine impressio and the natural inclinatio are closely linked.

But just how closely are they linked?

On the usual account, the inclination is strictly internal, one and the same with nature conceived as a source, or at least picking up where nature leaves off, as it were. But St. Thomas makes clear that the inclination is itself the impressio from God: “every inclination of anything, whether natural or voluntary, is nothing but a kind of impression from the first mover; as the inclination of the arrow towards a fixed point is nothing but an impulse received from the archer.” In the treatise on law, he explains that law is a “rule and measure” which can be in something in two ways:

First, as in that which measures and rules: and since this is proper to reason, it follows that, in this way, law is in the reason alone. Secondly, as in that which is measured and ruled. In this way, law is in all those things that are inclined [inclinantur] to something by reason of some law: so that any inclination [inclinatio] arising from a law, may be called a law, not essentially but by participation as it were.

He illustrates the notion of legislative inclining more vividly in ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6:

the law, as to its essence, resides in him that rules and measures; but, by way of participation, in that which is ruled and measured; so that every inclination [inclinatio] or ordination which may be found in things subject to the law, is called a law by participation . . . . Now those who are subject to a law may receive a twofold inclination [inclinatio] from the lawgiver. First,

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194 Ibid.: “omnia participant aliqualikely legem aeternam, inquantum scilicet ex impressione eius habent inclinationes in propios actus et fines.”
195 Ibid.: “per quam habet naturalem inclinationem ad debitum actum et finem.”
196 ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154]; I-II, q. 93, a. 5, ad 1 [Leon. 7.166].
197 ST I, q. 103, a. 8 [Leon. 5.461]: “omnis inclinatio aliquid vel naturalis vel voluntaria, nihil est aliud quam quaedam impressio a primo movente, sicut inclinatio sagittae ad signum determinatum, nihil aliud est quaedam impressio a sagittante.”
198 ST I-II, q. 90, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 7.149]: “Uno modo, sicut in mensurante et regulante. Et quia hoc est proprium rationis, ideo per hunc modum lex est in ratione sola. Alio modo, sicut in regulato et mensurato. Et sic lex est in omnibus quae inclinantur in aliquid ex aliqua lege, ita quod quaelibet inclinatio proveniens ex aliqua lege, potest dici lex, non essentialiter, sed quasi participative.”
insofar as he directly inclines \textit{[inclinat]} his subjects to something; sometimes indeed different subjects to different acts; in this way we may say that there is a military law and a mercantile law. Secondly, indirectly; thus by the very fact that a lawgiver deprives a subject of some dignity, the latter passes into another order, so as to be under another law, as it were: thus if a soldier be turned out of the army, he becomes a subject of rural or of mercantile legislation.\footnote{ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.157-8]. “
lex essentialiter invenitur in regulante et mensurante, participative autem in eo quod mensuratur et regulatur; ita quod omnis inclinatio vel ordinatio quae invenitur in his quae subjecta sunt legi, participative dicitur lex . . . Potest autem in his quae subduntur legi, aliqua inclinatio inveniri dupliciter a legislatore. Uno modo, inquantum directe inclinat suos subditos ad aliquid; et diversos interdum ad diversos actus; secundum quem modum potest dici quod alia est lex miliitum, et alia est lex mercatorum. Alio modo, indirecte, inquantum scilicet per hoc quod legislator destituit aliquem sibi subditum aliqua dignitate, sequitur quod transeat in alium ordinem et quasi in aliam legem, puta si miles ex militia destituatur, transibit in legem rusticorum vel mercatorum.”
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Although this usage of \textit{inclinare} in a legislative sense is uncharacteristic of the natural law tradition, it nevertheless reflects the political senses of \textit{inclinare} Niermeyer identifies in middle Latin: i.e., “to subdue” or “to compel” (transitive) and “to submit to a lord” (intransitive).\footnote{Thomas is no stranger to the world of political hierarchy. But natural inclination is not reducible to violence or coercion (or, still less, enslavement) by an arbitrary ruler. But it must be kept in mind that, for Thomas, the human lawgiver is constrained by reason. \textit{Lex iniusta non est lex.}

\footnote{ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.158]: “Sic igitur sub Deo legislatore diversae creaturae diversas habent naturales inclinationes, ita ut quod uni est quodammodo lex, alteri sit contra legem, ut si dicam quod furibundum esse est quodammodo lex canis, est autem contra legem ovis vel alterius mansueti animalis. . . . Sic igitur ipsa sensualitatis inclinationi, quae fomes dicitur, in alia quidem animalibus simpliciter habet rationem legis, illo tamen modo quo in talibus lex dici potest, secundum directam inclinationem.”
Ibid.: “ut secundum rationem operetur.”}

My concern here is not with human positive law but with St. Thomas’s extension of this analogy of legislative inclining to the Divine Legislator, who gives each creature its natural inclination:

Accordingly under the Divine Lawgiver various creatures have various natural inclinations, so that what is, as it were, a law for one, is against the law for another: thus I might say that fierceness is, in a way, the law of a dog, but against the law of a sheep or another meek animal. . . . So, then, this very inclination of sensuality which is called the ‘fomes,’ in other animals has simply the nature of a law (yet only insofar as a law may be said to be in such things), by reason of a direct inclination.\footnote{Ibid.: “ut secundum rationem operetur.”}

The law for man, of course, is not sensuality alone, but rather “that he should act in accordance with reason.”\footnote{Ibid.: “ut secundum rationem operetur.”} In the \textit{Commentary on the Divine Names}, St. Thomas goes so far...
as to identify the law with natural inclination.\textsuperscript{203}

The inclination, therefore, is not merely a self-inclining, but a divine inclining of the thing, albeit through the thing’s nature. Each thing, in this way, is ruled and measured by the eternal law. One must hasten to add that man, as a rational creature, rules and measures himself only in a relative way. He is a “ruled rule” (\textit{regula regulata}) and a “measured measure” (\textit{mensura mensurata}).\textsuperscript{204} Man’s self-providential inclining presuposes his own natural inclination, which natural inclination, in turn, is not only given by God as the product of an \textit{impressio}, but is itself a “being inclined” by God. Although St. Thomas could have used the terms \textit{appetitus} or \textit{desiderium}, neither would have carried the twofold sense of being inclined as well as tending from within. On the other hand, \textit{instinctus}, ironically from a modern standpoint, over-emphasizes the intrinsic, divine instigation. In this way, St. Thomas accounts for the divine origins of the natural law as understood by Gratian; but, in contrast to the decretists, St. Thomas is careful to distinguish God (called \textit{summa natura} by some) from the nature relevant to natural law, human nature, which is inclined by God.

\textit{b. Being inclined and inclining toward: Cicero’s innate power clarified}

In the \textit{Sentences} commentary, St. Thomas says that natural law is “natural by its principle, because it is instilled by nature: and thus Tully defines it (\textit{De Inv. Rhet.} ii) when he says: ‘Natural right is not what opinion begets, but a certain innate power inserted.’”\textsuperscript{205} In the text quoted, Cicero adds that this force is “inserted” (\textit{inseruit}). St. Thomas’s notion of divine

\begin{footnotes}
\item[203] \textit{In De div. nom.}, cap. 10, lect. 1, n. 857 [Marietti 321]: “\textit{lex enim Dei est cui libet creaturae infixa naturalis inclinationi ipsius ad agendum id quod convenit ei secundum naturalam; et ideo, sicut omnia tenetur a desiderio divino, ita tenetur a legibus eius.”
\item[204] Hittinger, \textit{First Grace}, 97.
\item[205] \textit{In IV Sent.}, d. 33 q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968]: “\textit{jus aliquod dicitur naturale ex principio, quia a natura est inditum; et sic definit Tullius in 2 rhetoricon, dicens: \textit{jus naturae est quod non opinio genuit, sed quaedam innata vis inseruit},” citing Cicero \textit{Inv. Rhet.} 2.53.161: “\textit{Natura ius est, quod non opinio genuit sed quaedam in natura vis insevit, ut religionem, pietatem, gratiam, vindicationem, observantiam, veritatem.”
\end{footnotes}
inclining, as discussed, also accounts for the “insertion” of this innate force. But St.
Thomas’s concern here seems to be to associate Cicero’s definition with nature as an intrinsic
principle. Natural law is an in-born power in all men. At this stage, St. Thomas is content to
employ Cicero’s authoritative language verbatim as a stand-in for natural principle.

But in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, the language of *vis* is gone; instead St. Thomas speaks in
NI-language consistently. As St. Thomas makes clear in his *Commentary on the Physics*, the
notion that nature is not a *vis insita in rebus* is ridiculous because it does not convey
sufficiently the teleological character of nature as a principle of motion and rest, as defined
by Aristotle.\(^{206}\) Also, in the cases where St. Thomas mixes *vis*-language with NI-language, it
is clear that the inclination is distinct from the power.\(^{207}\) Also, *vis* (as compared with, e.g.,
*potentia* or *natura*) is typically a psychological term, not an ontological term, in that it refers
to a cognitive or appetitive power of the soul. St. Thomas’s *inclin*-language thus
distinguishes the inclination of nature from nature conceived as a power, expresses the
teleological determinateness of nature’s tendency, and articulates the natural principle
underlying natural law in ontological, rather than psychological terms.

c. Natura inclinat: Ulpianic animal nature subsumed.

For Ulpian, natural law is a teaching, illustrated by examples: the union of male and
female, the begetting and rearing of children. In the *Commentary on the Sentences*, St.
Thomas views Ulpian’s definition as a narrow sense of natural law, a sense in which the law

\(^{206}\) *In II Phys.*, lect. 1, n. 5 [Leon 2.57]: “deridendi sunt qui volentes definitionem Aristotelis corrigere,
naturam per aliquid absolutum definire conati sunt, dicentes quod natura est vis insita rebus, vel aliquid
huiusmodi.”

\(^{207}\) He identifies natural power (*virtus naturalis*) with NI, using expressions such as *virtus naturae,
quae inclinat*, *virtus naturalis secundum naturalem inclinationem*, and *inclinatio naturalis virtutis inhaerentis,
ST I-II, q. 21, a. 1 [Leon. 6.164]; ST III, q. 57, a. 3 [Leon. 11.531]; *De pot.*, q. 5, a. 5 [Marietti 142].
is natural “from its nature [understood as material principle], because it is about natural
things.”\textsuperscript{208} These natural things are “distinguished from reason, whereby man is a man.”\textsuperscript{209} It
follows, St. Thomas continues, that “if we take natural right in its narrowest sense
\textit{[strictissimo modo]}, those things which are dictated by natural reason and pertain to man
alone are not said to be of natural right, but only those which are dictated by natural reason
and are common to man and other animals.”\textsuperscript{210} In \textit{ST I-II}, q. 94, a. 2, St. Thomas no longer
emphasizes matter and form. Although generic nature stands in relation to specific nature as
matter to form, and the human nature in question is form, in this later text he emphasizes the
\textit{inclinatio hominis}, which has three components in the inclination of one substance. The
language of the \textit{Digest} stands verbatim, but is subsumed into a larger unity.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Some of St. Thomas’s recent interpreters do him a double injustice. In one way, they
under-interpret his NI-language by equating it with Darwinian instinct and lopping off its
extrinsic-transitive sense. Second, they underestimate the wisdom of St. Thomas’s choice of
\textit{inclinatio} as the \textit{mot juste} for articulating his grand synthesis of the competing natural law
definitions of his day. Not to overstate the case—for words signify, and do not create,
things—but the elegance of St. Thomas’s NI-lexicon is noteworthy and, in turn, helps to
better understand his “theonomic” natural law doctrine in \textit{ST I-II}, q. 94, a. 2.

\textsuperscript{208} \textit{In IV Sent.}, d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968]: “a natura, quia de naturalibus est.”
\textsuperscript{209} Ibid.: “contra rationem dividitur, a qua homo est homo.”
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid.: “ideo strictissimo modo accipiendo jus naturale, illa quae ad homines tantum pertinent, etsi
sint de dictamine rationis naturalis, non dicuntur esse de jure naturali: sed illa tantum quae naturalis ratio dictat
de his quae sunt homini aliisque communia.”
In one sense, it may be said that St. Thomas did for the many threads of natural law tradition what Gratian had done for canon law in his “Harmony of discordant canons” (*Concordia discordantium canonum*, the *Decretum*’s original title).\(^{211}\) The result is a philosophical synthesis of divergent *auctoritates*, each of which is given its due within a whole which is greater than its parts.\(^{212}\) The unifying element in this synthesis is, in large measure, his precise and analogically supple notion of *inclinatio naturalis*.

\(^{211}\) On the title of the *Decretum*, see Anders Winroth, *The Making of Gratian’s Decretum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 5: “This title illustrates the aims and methods of its author, who attempted to resolve the contradictions among the canons.”

\(^{212}\) “In a manner, he molded himself on the tongue of his authors to the point where he gives the illusion that he is simply copying them, when, on the contrary, he is transferring them into his own thought.” Chenu, *Understanding Thomas*, 120.
CHAPTER III
NATURA: HUMAN NATURE AND NATURAL INCLINATION

[I]lle qui sic dicit, naturam scilicet non agere propter aliquid,
destruit naturam et ea quae sunt secundum naturam.

As we have seen, in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, Aquinas describes a threefold “inclination of man” (inclinatio hominis). Each level of this inclination corresponds to a certain “nature”: (1) “the nature which he has in common with all substances” (naturam in qua communicat cum omnibus substantiis); (2) “that nature which he has in common with other animals” (naturam in qua communicat cum ceteris animalibus); and (3) “the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him” (naturam rationis, quae est sibi propria). What, then, is human nature? Is man’s “true” nature only that one which is “proper” to humankind: the nature of his reason? If so, are the other two natures (substantial and animal) somehow separate from his humanity? Or is man’s nature a single composite of all three “layers” of nature?

The text of the article at hand (q. 94, a. 2) does not by itself answer these questions. Indeed, in response to an objection in the same article, St. Thomas suggests that human nature is a unity of some kind and, at the same time, a disunity in need of a unifier (unruly appetites subject to reason):

All the inclinations of any parts whatsoever of human nature, e.g. of the concupiscible and irascible parts, insofar as they are ruled by reason, belong to the natural law and are reduced to one first precept . . . so that the precepts of the natural law are many in themselves, but share in one root.

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1 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170].
2 The question presented in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 is whether there is only one precept of the natural law, or many precepts. The objection is raised that, if there were multiple precepts corresponding to human nature’s many parts, “oportebit quod etiam ea quae sunt de inclinatione concupiscibilis, pertinent ad legem naturalem.” ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, arg. 2 [Leon. 7.169]. The objection anticipates the modern view that nature, considered as including our lower “urges and impulses,” provides no moral compass.
3 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “omnes inclinationes quarumcumque partium humanae naturae, puta concupiscibilis et irascibilis, secundum quod regulantur ratione, pertinent ad legem naturalem, et
St. Thomas here seems to set reason against human nature, the parts of which must be ruled by reason, as if reason were separate from human nature. But in the corpus he refers to man’s reason as nature too, the nature proper to man. In the same text, he also characterizes nature as an extrinsic teacher—as if nature were separate from, or larger than, man.

To give an adequate account of the “real nature” underlying natural law, this chapter takes up the preliminary tasks of showing which of St. Thomas’s many senses of natura are relevant to natural law, and of distinguishing those relevant senses from certain “dangerous” senses of “nature” in contemporary English. The chapter proceeds in four sections. Section A investigates the many meanings of natura in St. Thomas’s Latin and distinguishes between certain “proper” and “improper” senses with reference to natural law. Section B describes the dangers of reading St. Thomas’s natural law texts in terms of certain modern senses of the English word “nature.” Section C explores whether human nature is primarily animal or rational, or somehow both. Finally, section D examines what St. Thomas means by the “order of the natural inclinations” in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

A. Natura in St. Thomas’s Latin: nomen naturae multipliciter dicitur

In contrast with the term inclinatio, there is a rich literature on natura, a word which has an extraordinary range of meanings in classical and medieval usage. St. Thomas himself

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4 He does not say what the “one root” is, but this language seems to be a reference to the primary precept of the natural law—not human nature itself. Elsewhere, the phrase “in one root” refers to law. See Catena in Matth., cap. 7, lect. 6 [Vivès 1.129], in quot., St. John Chrysostomus: “Nam quaecumque lex et prophetarum sparsim in omnibus praeceperunt Scripturis, in hoc compendioso continentur mandato, quasi innumerabiles arborum rami in una radice.” The primary precept is simply that the good is to be pursued and done, and evil avoid.

5 Those things which “natura omnia animalia docuit” pertain to the natural law. ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170].
uses the term *natura* in numerous distinct senses throughout the corpus. Some of these senses are directly relevant to his understanding of natural law, while others, especially those that anticipate misleading modern senses of “nature” and “natural,” are not the *natura* proper to natural law. For example, he sometimes uses the term *natura* to mean the realm of all irrational creatures—a dominant sense of “nature” in modern English and modern philosophy (see section B below). In some places he says that whatever happens in the world, including death, is natural in some sense (see Chapter V).

1. **Proper and Improper Senses of natura**

   In this context, by “proper” and “improper,” I simply mean that some senses of *natura* are more relevant to natural law than others. Indeed, certain “improper” senses of *natura*, if mistaken for the nature that makes natural law *natural* could lead to serious errors. To use two simple examples, to say the “the nature of the triangle” is to use “nature” in the wide Boethian sense of a nature as any entity that the intellect can grasp. This sense of nature certainly includes human nature, but it is not specific enough for natural law purposes because if everything is a nature, nature hardly provides a principle for discriminating between right and wrong. Second, if St. Thomas says that death is natural, as we shall see he

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7 *In II Sent.*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 1 [Mand. 2.943] (“Nomen naturae multipliciter dicitur.”); SCG IV, cap. 41, n. 2 [Leon. 15.140] (“Natura . . . multis modis dicatur”). Schütz’s Thomas-Lexikon lists nine definitions of *natura*, and forty-one distinct kinds (*arten*) of *natura* (ranging, in alphabetical order, from *natura absoluta* to *natura universalis*). Schütz, s.v. “natura.”

8 *ST* I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116] (death is in a sense natural); *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 7.172] (“in rebus naturalibus quidquid a Deo fit, est quodammodo naturale”).

9 Thomas also uses *natura* in a Boethian sense to mean any intelligible thing. *In II Sent.*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 1 [Mand. 2.943]: “nomen naturae multipliciter dicitur, ut Boetius dicit. Primo enim modo dicitur natura, secundum quod communiter ad omnia entia se habet, prout natura definitur omne id quod intellectu quoquo modo capi potest.” E.g., the eye, the number three, or the vice of injustice is a nature. This is not what Thomas means by nature in regard to natural law.
does in a certain sense, he does not mean that we have a natural law obligation to kill each other.

The chief distinction I would like to focus on first, however, is that between nature as form and nature as matter. With regard to particular things, St. Thomas uses *natura* in two basic senses, one of which is the proper sense with respect to natural law. For St. Thomas, as for Aristotle, nature is a principle of motion and rest. This principle, in turn, can be either form or matter. *Natura* in the sense of form is principle of motion towards a thing’s proper end. Nature as form is the nature all members of a given kind of thing have in common. This is the sense of nature that is proper to natural law. In *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 3, St. Thomas makes clear that the “nature” according to which man is inclined in the natural law sense is “according to his form.” Accordingly, “to the law of nature pertain those things to which man is naturally inclined, among which it is proper to man that he be inclined to act according to reason.” “Rational nature” is not intellect alone, but the whole of man’s nature, which has animality in common with irrational animals and being in common with all substances. This nature-as-form is common to all men. Thus the natural inclinations St.

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10 See In II Phys., lect. 1, n. 5 [Leon. 2.56]: “natura nihil aliud est quam *principium motus et quietis in eo in quo est primo et per se et non secundum accidens.*”

11 Ibid.

12 *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170]: “ad legem naturae pertinet omne illud ad quod homo inclinatur secundum suam naturam. Inclinatur autem unumquodque naturaliter ad operationem sibi convenientem secundum suam formam, sicut ignis ad calefaciendum. Unde cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis, naturalis inclinatio inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem. Et hoc est agere secundum virtutem.”

13 *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 4 [Leon. 7.171]: “ad legem naturae pertinent ea ad quae homo naturaliter inclinatur; inter quae homini proprium est ut inclinetur ad agendum secundum rationem.”

14 *ST* I-II, q. 93, a. 6 [Leon. 7.166]: “rationalis natura, cum eo quod est commune omnibus creaturis, habet aliquid sibi proprium inquantum est rationalis.”

15 The nature of the species is the nature that all members of a species have in common. In this sense the natural inclination of a species is common to all individuals of that species. See *SCG* III, cap. 113, n. 2 (“quaes... consequuntur speciem, sunt communia et naturalia omnibus individuis sub specie contentis,” “inclinacionem naturalem toti speciei communem”); *SCG* III, cap. 113, n. 3 (“inclinatio speciei”); *In X Ethic.*,
Thomas describes in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, in turn, are all inclinations that follow upon man’s common, formal nature. Man, considered as form, seeks survival, both as an individual and an animal species. Hence death, bodily corruption, and sexual perversions are contrary to nature understood as form. Ignorance and anti-social conduct are contrary to man’s common rational nature. Men as human have a natural inclination to virtue, but not to vice. All of these are natural inclinations “in the man” (*inest homini*). 

By contrast, nature as matter is the “individual nature” (*natura individualis*) of one man, which is not normative for the entire species. This material nature is the bodily “make-up” (*complexio*) a man has from birth as an individual (as distinct from human kind as a species). Thus a thing can be “natural” in two ways: “in one way, according to the nature of the species, as it is natural to man to be risible, and to fire to be borne upwards; in another way, according to the nature of the individual, as it is natural to Socrates or Plato to be sick...”

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lect. 8, n. 11 [Leon. 47/2.576:117-19] (“operationes et delectationes... animalium consequuntur naturalem inclinationem, quae est eadem in omnibus animalibus eiusdem speciei”). Conversely, an inclination that is generally observed among all members of a species is a natural inclination. See *In I De caelo*, lect. 2 n. 6 [Leon. 3.7]: “Ea enim quae sunt propria singulis in modo loquendi, videntur provenire ex propriis conceptionibus uniusculiusque: sed id quod observatur communi apud omnes, videtur ex naturali inclinatione provenire.” *Communiter* (“in general”) we speak in certain manners (e.g., we use the term both in reference to two things and all in reference to three or more things) “propter hoc quod natura ad hoc nos inclinat.” Ibid.


17 *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170].

18 *ST* I-II, q. 63, a. 1 [Leon. 6.406] (“id... quod est ei naturale secundum determinatam corporis complexionem, est ei naturale secundum naturam individui”); *ST* I-II, q. 46, a. 5 [Leon. 6.295] (“Potest enim natura aliquis hominis considerari vel secundum naturam generis, vel secundum naturam speciei, vel secundum complexionem propriam individui”); *ST* I-II, q. 46, a. 5, ad 1 [Leon. 6.295] (“in homine considerari potest et naturalis complexio ex parte corporis, quae est temperata, et ipsa ratio”). In a few texts, Thomas equates natural inclination (in the improper sense of the inclination of matter) with *complexio naturalis*. *ST* II-II, q. 123, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 10.4] (“ex naturali complexione aliquis habeat naturalem inclinationem ad virtutem”); *CG* III, cap. 85, n. 20 [Leon. 14.256]. A thing can have a natural inclination to evil, where nature (improper sense) is the individual’s bodily *complexio*. *De malo*, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:182-85]: “potest dici aliquid naturaliter malum, quia est ei naturalis inclination ad malum; sicut quidam homines sunt naturaliter iracundi vel concupiscentes propter complexionem.”
or healthy according to his own temperament.” An individual, as individual, may have a natural inclination in virtue of his bodily disposition or complexion, which can include a wide range of propensities, good and bad, that are not common to the species. For example, some men, according to their bodily disposition, have a natural inclination to certain virtues or vices. But this is not the sense of natural inclination in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2. The fact that Socrates is sickly or was born disposed to the virtue of courage is not the basis of the natural law obligations to seek health or act courageously.

2. Natura in the Proper Sense is Analogical, Ontological, and Teleological

Aquinas’s natura is analogical in that it applies across a wide range of things: corporeal, animal, and rational. For St. Thomas, as for Aristotle, it is self-evident that there are many different natures or kinds. The nature of each kind of thing is a principle of motion by which it inclines towards a determinate end. Nature is also ontological, not merely empirical or psychological. As Jan Aertsen explains, Aquinas in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 means nature in an ontological and analogical way, not a physical-univocal way: “Thomas intends the ontological meaning of ‘nature.'” Accordingly, Aertsen continues,

What is natural must be determined in relation to the thing of which it is said essentially. That means that nature as a common name is an analogical name. According to the diversity of

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19 ST I-II, q. 51, a. 1 [Leon. 6.325]: “aliqud potest esse naturale alicui dupliciter. Uno modo, secundum naturam speciei, sicut naturale est homini esse risibile, et igni ferri sursum. Alio modo, secundum naturam individui, sicut naturale est Socrati vel Platoni esse aegrotativum vel sanativum, secundum propriam complexionem.”

20 In VI Ethic., lect. 11, n. 12 [Leon. 47/2.3-5:67-68]: “Videmus enim quod non idem homo est optime natus ad omnes virtutes, sed alius ad liberalitatem, alius ad temperantiam, et sic de alius; facile autem unusquisque perducitur in id ad quod naturaliter inclinatur.” De virt. comm., a. 8, ad 10 [Marietti 710]: “ad ea quae sunt unius virtutis, potest esse inclinatio naturalis. Sed ad ea quae sunt omnium virtutum, non posset esse inclinatio a natura; quia dispositio naturalis quae inclinat ad unam virtutem, inclinat ad contrarium alterius virtutis: puta, qui est dispositus secundum naturam ad fortitudinem, quae est in prosequendo ardua, est minus dispositus ad mansuetudinem, quae consistit in refrenando passiones irascibilis.”
things there is a diversity of natures. Thus, when we speak of human being, “nature” is to be related to the essence of man, to his “anima.”

Nature is “among the common names.”

Nature is not the endless lurching of matter in motion in a geometrical matrix. It acts for an end. Nature is a principle of motion, but nature “never inclines to movement for the sake of movement.” Nature is “a certain kind of art, i.e., the divine art, impressed upon things, by which these things are moved to a determinate end. It is as if the shipbuilder were able to give to timbers that by which they would move themselves to take the form of a ship.” The determinate end of a given nature is the good for the nature so inclined. For example, the good for a heavy body is to be at rest in its proper place; accordingly it inclines by nature to that determinate place. As St. Thomas writes,

there must be a specific difference between the place from which something is locally moved and the place into which it is naturally borne, just as what is healed does not tend to just anything at random, as though by chance, or solely according to the will of the mover, but to something definite, to which it is inclined by nature.

St. Thomas’s usage and etymology of natura reflect his realist philosophy. As in the case of inclinatio, the meaning of the term natura conveys the common experience of things

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21 Jan Aertsen, “Natural Law in the Light of the Doctrine of Transcendentals,” in Lex et Libertas (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1987), 107. “That is said to be ‘natural’ to [a thing] which belongs to it according to its substance; and this is in a thing essentially (per se).” In V Meta., lect. 5, n. 823 [Marietti 268]. See ST I-II, q. 10, a. 1 [Leon. 6.83].

22 Ibid.

23 De pot., q. 5, a. 5 [Marietti 142]: “natura nunquam inclinat ad motum propter movere, sed propter aliquid determinatum quod ex motu consequitur; sicut natura gravis inclinat ad quietem in medio.”

24 In II Phys., lect. 14, n. 8 [Leon. 2.96]. “nihil est aliud quam ratio cuiusdam artis, scilicet divinae, indita rebus, qua ipsae res moventur ad finem determinatum: sicut si artifex factor navis posset lignis tribuere, quod ex ipsis moverentur ad navis formam inducendam.” The image of the ship-builder is Aristotle’s (Physics II.199b26-32), but Aristotle does not draw the conclusion that nature is the divine art. See Chapter VII, infra, for discussion of divine art.

25 In I De caelo, lect. 17, n. 8 [Leon. 3.69]: “opertet quod specie differat locus a quo aliquid movetur localiter, et in quem naturaliter fertur; sicut id quod sanatur non tendit ubicumque contingit, quasi a casu, neque ex sola voluntate moveantis, sed ad aliquid determinatum, ad quod natura inclinatur.”

26 Chenu, Towards Understanding, 116: “[Etymology] forced the mind back to the incipient state in which a word embodies more closely the reality it expresses and in which it still enjoys its vivid expressiveness.”
prompted to motion towards determinate ends. *Natura* in its original sense simply means birth.\(^{27}\) *Per extensum,* nature means the principle of generation of living things and, more broadly, principle of motion and rest. Although nature can be a material principle, “with reference to the order which things have in reality the concept of nature primarily fits the form, because . . . nothing is said to have a nature unless it has a form.”\(^{28}\) Inclining is a real action by the divine artisan; likewise, nature is a springing forth, a principle not only of generation but of the development of each thing according to its substantial form. *Inclinatio naturalis* is thus rooted in the primary phenomena of bending and birth, respectively. These primary phenomena are empirical and psychological in the sense that they are better known to us prior to reasoning, but philosophical investigation shows that the inclinations of nature by God are constitutive of nature as being, and are for that reason better known in themselves.

**B. Dangerous Senses of “Nature” in English**

To understand St. Thomas’s concept of natural inclination, it is of the utmost importance to distinguish his *natura* from the English cognate terms “nature” and “natural.” The reader should be aware—nay, should *beware*—that these English words have been distorted by modern philosophers, lexicographers, and customary usage to the point that they now mean something far different from St. Thomas’s terms *natura* and *naturalis,* especially in the senses proper to natural law.\(^{29}\) These distorted senses are, in C. S. Lewis’s terms, very “dangerous.”

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\(^{27}\) *ST* III, q. 2, a. 1 [Leon. 11.22].

\(^{28}\) Rowan trans., 300. In *V Meta*., lect. 5, nn. 825 [Marietti 268]: “secundum rerum ordinem, formae prius competit ratio naturae, quia . . . nihil dicitur habens naturam, nisi secundum quod habet formam.”

\(^{29}\) The same applies to other modern European languages that translate *natura* with cognates. See Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* at 43-44. As Jean-Marie Aubert warns, “Le mot de *nature* avait pour S.
1. Brutal Nature

Contrast St. Thomas’s *natura*-as-Divine-art with Tennyson’s “Nature is red in tooth and claw.” The poet’s lurid description illustrates at once what is arguably the dominant sense of nature in modern English: nature as the whole of reality, understood in physical-biological terms, having no *telos*. English reflects and perpetuates powerful currents in modern philosophy, which have transformed nature into something far more, and far less, than St. Thomas’s *natura*. Modern nature is far more than *natura ad mentem Thomae*, because modern nature describes a wider range of phenomena univocally: all of matter in motion is nature. The motion proper to (and good for) a specific kind of thing and motions contrary to that thing’s good (including violent and pathological motions) are both, at bottom, natural in the same sense.

Modern nature is also far less than St. Thomas’s *natura*, because modern nature is flat: it moves, but towards no determinate end. Bodies, of which nature is comprised, move only according to the “laws” of material and efficient causality. Reason, in this account, is either separate from, or reducible to, nature. To understand St. Thomas’s *natur*-terms in either of these modern senses is to miss the point of his *inclinatio naturalis* and,

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consequently, of his *lex naturalis*, as a number of scholars have acknowledged.  

Despite occasional acknowledgements of the stark contrast between St. Thomas’s *natura* and modern nature, the term *inclinaciones naturales* in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 is commonly translated as “natural inclinations” or even simply “the inclinations” without qualification, as if all inclinations were natural in the sense proper to natural law.

For traditional Thomistic natural law theory, as noted in the Introduction, the stakes are high. If “natural inclination” is not, or cannot be, distinguished from non-natural or unnatural inclinations, or if the term is taken in a brutally biologistic (and non-teleological) sense, radical consequences ensue. If St. Thomas’s teleological physics is obsolete, as Leo Strauss and others seem to assume, then his natural law theory is no longer plausible. The teleology of nature having been replaced by a materialist notion of nature, traditional natural law doctrine becomes susceptible to standard modern critiques. If good and bad inclinations are both equally natural, nature can hardly provide a fitting substrate for morality. Many scholars reject St. Thomas’s natural law theory for this reason. Others, Roman Catholics who seek to preserve the moral conclusions of natural law in accord with Church teachings, re-ground their moral theory on very different, un-Thomistic bases—a “natural law without...

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33 See, e.g., John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, passim. Finnis refers to the natural inclinations as “these urges,” “basic inclinations, drives, or urges,” “a certain range of urges, drives, or inclinations,” “tendencies” (of irrational things), and “felt inclinations.” Ibid., 91, 380, 400, and 403. Finnis adds: “without reasonable direction the inclinations will bring about individual and communal ruin.” Ibid., 380.

34 Strauss, for example, writes, “Natural right in its classic form is connected with a teleological view of the universe. . . . The teleological view of the universe, of which the teleological view of man forms a part, would seem to have been destroyed by modern natural science.” Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 8.

nature” in some cases. Still others attempt to ground a notion of “natural right” on a modern, Darwinian concept of nature.

2. Natura vs. Two Especially Dangerous Senses of “Nature”

John Stuart Mill, without addressing St. Thomas by name, attacks whatever was left of scholastic natural law teaching in his day on grounds of the meaning of “nature,” to which term Mill attributes “two principal meanings,” both of which are especially dangerous, indeed fatal, for understanding St. Thomas’s natural law. Mill states that “[‘nature’] either denotes the entire system of things, with the aggregates of all their properties, or it denotes things as they would be, apart from human intervention.” Mill then strikes at the heart of the natural lawyer’s nature. If nature is everything and all its properties, then “the doctrine that man ought to follow nature is unmeaning; since man has no power to do anything else than follow nature; all his actions are done through, and in obedience to, some one or many of nature’s physical or mental laws.” If, in the second sense, nature is prior to man, then “the doctrine that man . . . ought to make the spontaneous course of things the model of his voluntary actions, is equally irrational and immoral.” For example, according to Mill, Southern and Eastern Europeans, left to their own devices, have a “natural inclination” to cruelty.

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36 Later thinkers, such as John Finnis and Germain Grisez, accept the alleged demise of teleological nature, but attempt to found a Thomistic natural law on the requirements of practical reason. The result, according to their critics, is a sort of “natural law without nature.” Pamela Hall, Narrative and the Natural Law: An Interpretation of Thomistic Ethics (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 16.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid. It is irrational because all “useful” human action consists in “altering, and . . . improving, the spontaneous course of nature” and immoral because “the course of natural phenomena being replete with everything which when committed by human beings is most worthy of abhorrence, any one who endeavoured in his actions to imitate the natural course of things would be universally seen . . . to be the wickedest of men.” Ibid., 64-65.
41 Ibid., 82.
Mill’s account, “natural inclination” can provide no moral compass.\(^4\) Corresponding to Mill’s two definitions, there are two groups of meanings of “nature” that especially cloud our understanding of Aquinas’s *inclinatio naturae*: (1) nature as the “physical” (including biological) world understood in terms of modern science; and (2) nature as a pristine, unconstrained, or untutored state, in contrast with (or opposed to) human will, artifice, or convention.

\(a\). *Nature as the “physical world”*

According to R. G. Collingwood, “in modern European languages the word ‘nature’ is on the whole most often used in a collective sense for the sum total or aggregate of natural things.”\(^4\) This sense of nature as the realm of the physical or biological is the most common, and most misleading, sense of nature in English. The *OED*’s entry for “nature” prominently lists “senses relating to the material world,” e.g., “the phenomena of the physical world collectively.” Similarly, the *American Heritage College Dictionary*’s top three definitions of “nature” are: (1) “the material world and its phenomena”; (2) the “forces and processes that produce and control” the material world; and (3) “the world of living things.”

In relation to human things, nature in this physicalist sense can be taken in either of two ways: (1) in a Cartesian sense, nature is beneath, or otherwise distinct from, human things; or (2) in a materialist sense, human things are reduced to nature.\(^4\) If nature and

\(4\) Ibid., 82. He rejects the view that “every natural inclination must have some sphere of action granted to it, some opening left for its gratification.” Ibid., 54.

\(4\) Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature*, 43-44. By “natural things,” Collingwood means material quantities that can be observed and measured using the methods of modern empirical science. Ibid.

\(4\) Leo Strauss claims that human teleology, in the modern understanding, is either reduced to “desires or impulses” or preserved by means of “a fundamental, typically modern, dualism of a nonteleological natural science and a teleological science of man.” *Natural Right and History*, 8. Cf. Scott Buchanan, *So Reason Can Rule*, 303: “The reflective reason of man is clearly purposive, but the rest of nature sleeps in its mechanical and mathematical order.”
reason are bifurcated, reason is not considered above or apart from nature. Reason, the last refuge of teleology, must master nature. In this way, the terms “nature” and “natural” with respect to human beings are often taken to refer to man’s bodily requirements or organs as contrasted with reason and freedom. Focusing narrowly on “nature” in this sense, opponents of traditional Thomistic natural law theories deride what they regard as a “physicalism” or “biologism” that seems to reduce sexual morality to bodily structures and define sin in terms of “perverted faculties.” In the view of some of these authors, human freedom and true morality cannot be limited by the heteronomy of mere biology. Moral rectitude must be rigorously distinguished from natural inclination.

By comparison, in a materialist-reductionist approach, the rational and the physical are not two different realms; reason is collapsed into a single, univocal nature. “Natural” means material as observed using the methods of modern empirical science. The phenomena of reason and freedom are mere epiphenomena concealing a more fundamental

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45 Reason “feign[s] the world to be annihilated” and creates nature anew. Thomas Hobbes, De corpore, 7.1.

46 Thus, in the OED, a group of definitions of “nature” relates to “physical impulses and requirements,” including “sexual urges” and the “need of the body to defecate and urinate,” and “vital functions of the human body as requiring sustenance, esp. nourishment.” On “natural” as referring to bodily functions, see Chapter IV.


48 The OED defines “natural” as meaning, inter alia, “Dealing with, concerned with, or relating to the natural world and natural phenomena as objects of study or research.”
physical reality. In this sense, as Quintin Hogg writes, “everything that goes on in the . . . world is natural,” and “all the acts of man, however irrational or perverse, are simply natural phenomena taking their place with the lowing of cattle, the movement of the tides, the smooth elliptical course of the planets, or the ritual dance of the electrons round the nucleus of the atom.”

“Everything that goes on” in the world is thus reducible to nature understood as matter in motion. Form is reduced to matter and the ever-shifting results of an evolutionary process. The powers and operation once explained in terms of “soul” are explained in terms of the Darwinian idea of natural selection by differential reproductive success.

St. Thomas does use natura in certain senses that seem to anticipate modern usage, but modern “nature” is scarcely continuous with St. Thomas’s natura-lexicon. The

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50 See, e.g., Alan S. Miller and Satosha Kanazawa, “Ten Politically Incorrect Truths About Human Nature,” Psychology Today, June 18, 2009 (online edition last accessed June 11, 2011) (“evolutionary psychologists see human nature as a collection of psychological adaptations that often operate beneath conscious thinking to solve problems of survival and reproduction by predisposing us to think or feel in certain ways”). Although nature in this reductionist sense seems to be hardly a fitting substrate for morality, unabashed “naturalists” attempt to reground moral philosophy on a univocal notion of nature. For a “naturalist” argument that the notion of moral responsibility should be abolished for the benefit of mankind, see Bruce Waller, Against Moral Responsibility (MIT Press, 2011). True “moral judgment” would flourish and, overall, “We would be better off without it,” Waller claims. Ibid.

51 Thomas sometimes uses the term natura to mean, as Deferrari puts it, the “realm of irrational things.” Deferrari, s.v. “natura” (translated from Schütz verbatim). ST I-II, q. 93, a. 5 [Leon. 7.166]: “Deus imprimit toti naturae principia propriorum actuum.”). The notion that naturalia are subject to the Eternal Law seems to prefigure the modern notion of “scientific laws,” but there are important differences. See Charles A. Hart, “Law in Philosophy and Science,” Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association 11 (1935): 187-190. Thomas typically uses the term naturalia in reference to irrational creatures, including both bodies as such and living bodies. E.g., In I Phys., lect. 1, n. 3: “Et quia omne quod habet materiam mobili est, consequens est quod ens mobile sit subjectum naturalis philosophiae. Naturalis enim philosophia de naturalibus est; naturalia autem sunt quorum principium est natura.” Rarely, he speaks of human natura, e.g., Quodlibet VII, q.7, a.1 [Leon. 25/1.35:119-21]: “Illae . . . sunt de lege naturali ad quae homo ex suis naturalibus inclinatur.” The notion of an univocally physical-material notion of nature, in which reason and free will are collapsed into merely corporeal nature, would be an absurdity for Thomas. He does, however, seem to account for a great deal of human activity in terms of human bodily dispositions and the influence of celestial motions—at least among the common run of men (as distinct from the wise). See ST II-II, q. 95, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 9.320]. In a number of texts, he even opposes nature and will, or nature and reason, in man. See, e.g., ST I-II, q. 10, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon.
resemblance to modern usage is superficial and misleading in at least four respects. First, as St. Thomas himself repeatedly shows, the term *natura* can mean many different things and can apply analogously to different kinds of things. Accusations of “physicalism” presuppose a view of St. Thomas’s natural law doctrine through the lens of a modern, univocal notion of nature. But St. Thomas’s usage of *natura* is not limited to a narrow, material-only sense of nature.

Second, there can be no confusion of St. Thomas’s nature with modern “physicalist” nature in the non-teleological, Cartesian sense. For St. Thomas, as for Aristotle, there are many distinct kinds of things, which are not reducible to matter in motion—they are not epiphenomena masking more fundamental laws, forces, or elements. The teleology of nature is also real and evident. Nature acts for an end. To call nature’s action “end-directed,” i.e., intentional is not to paste a stop-gap metaphor upon the lurching of an end-less mechanism that cannot be described in terms of common experience. Nature is the divine art in the sense that the divine intelligence provides the end toward which the agent tends, but the tendency follows upon nature as an intrinsic source. Accordingly, the dominant senses of nature in St. Thomas’s lexicon are nature as the source of motion in a thing towards its determinate end and nature as the essence of a specific kind of thing. By contrast, in modern thought, nature as a whole or aggregate of underlying forces is the primary sense of nature. The “natural” is that which is produced through the operation of physical laws common to all material

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6.83-84] (“voluntas dividitur contra naturam sicut una causa contra aliam”); SCG II, cap. 48, a. 1 [Leon. 13.376-77]; ST I, q. 19, a. 4 [Leon. 4.237]; ST I, q. 63, a. 5 [Leon. 5.130]; ST I, q. 82, a. 1 [Leon. 5.293]; I, q. 83, a. 1 [Leon. 5.307]; I-II, q.1, a. 2. See Tobias Hoffmann, “The Distinction Between Nature and Will in Duns Scotus,” Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age 66 (1999), 190 n. 3. Hoffmann notes that Aquinas’s distinction between nature and will “is less fundamental in [his] thought than it is in Scotus.” Also, Thomas also uses the notion of *natura universalis* which is responsible for the working of nature as a whole, including death and corruption. See, e.g., *In V Phys.*, lect. 10, n. 3 [Leon. 2.264]. The notions of universal nature and natural death are discussed in Chapter V.
things. Even when St. Thomas uses the terms *natura* and *naturalia* to mean “physical” (i.e., corporeal) things, he still means physical in a teleological sense, as distinct from a purely non-teleological mathematical sense. The “physical” in modern science, by contrast, is devoid of ends.

Third, for St. Thomas, there is a sense in which “everything that goes on” in the world—including death—is natural. However he carefully distinguishes what is natural for the entire created order (*natura universalis*) from what is natural for the species (*natura particularis*). Properly speaking, the natural inclination of a thing is to its self-preservation, life, and good according its specific form; however, death and corruption are natural only in the sense of *natura universalis*.

Fourth and finally, although a philosophical evolutionism along Darwinian lines brings human things (e.g., will and reason) back within the realm of nature, it does so in a univocal way: in effect, it explains (away) human action in terms of purely physical

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52 Whether understood on the model of a Renaissance world-machine or of Darwinian evolution, modern nature affords no real distinction of kinds or intrinsic teleology. If the world is a machine, art and nature are univocal, form and motion imposed directly from without, not through the secondary causality of intrinsic form. In contrast to Thomas’s natural teleology, the “as-if” teleology (i.e., “teleonomy”) of Darwinist evolution is not based on a divine pre-cognition of an end to be achieved. For Darwinists, ends are achieved only as a result of natural “selection.” For a comparison of teleonomy and teleology, see Robert Spaemann, “The Unrelinquishability of Teleology,” in *Contemporary Perspectives on Natural Law: Natural Law as a Limiting Concept*, ed. A. M. González, 281-294 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 286-7; Ernst Mayr, *Toward a New Philosophy of Biology: Observations of an Evolutionist*, 38-63. Seemingly goal-directed behavior follows from “programs” that are not designed or imprinted upon natures by God, but are instead only the product of differential reproductive success.

53 See *In III De anim.*, lect. 12; *SCG III*, cap. 56. With regard to the “intermediate sciences” (e.g., perspective, harmony (music), and astrology), which apply mathematics to sensible matter, the term *naturalis* applies only inasmuch as these sciences pertain to sensible matter. See *In II Phys.*, lect. 3, n. 2 [Leon 2.61-2]; *In I Meta.*, lect. 13, n. 202 [Marietti 71].

54 E.g., *ST I-II*, q. 42, a. 2 [Leon. 6.277] (“malum naturae, non solum quia privat naturae bonum, sed etiam quia est effectus naturae; sicut mors naturalis, et alii huiusmodi defectus”); *ST I-II*, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116] (death is in a sense natural); *ST I-II*, q. 94, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 7.173] (“in rebus naturalibus quidquid a Deo fit, est quodammodo naturale”).

55 Similarly, he speaks of defects in nature as being consistent with the “order of universal causes.” *ST I-II*, q. 93, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 7.166]: “defectus qui accidunt in rebus naturalibus, quanvis sint praeter ordinem causarum particularium, non tamen sunt praeter ordinem causarum universalium.” See Chapter V.
This reductionist notion contradicts St. Thomas’s analogical notion of nature as applying across the entire range of beings. For St. Thomas, each kind of being—from elements to stones to animals to man to the divine nature—can be described as a nature without entailing that God, man, or animals are really “nothing but” the elemental ingredients of a primordial broth that have self-assembled by chance according to certain scientific “laws of nature.”

In modernity, there have been various attempts to reconcile elements of the traditional natural law doctrine with nature understood in the non-teleological sense of modern science. William Blackstone, for example, simply equates physical and moral laws: each is a binding “rule of action” in the same sense. In a more sophisticated way, Hobbes molds natural law to the mechanical self-seeking of man’s bodily nature. St. Thomas can hardly be accused of doing the same. Any attempt to read St. Thomas’s natural law in terms of a modern, physicalist nature results in fundamental distortion of St. Thomas’s thought.

b. Nature as primitive, unconstrained, untutored state

By extension from its physicalist senses, “nature” in English often suggests an opposition between a primitive, “natural” condition and a modification of that condition through the “artificial” means of technology and convention. The American Heritage

56 As Bernard Inagaki explains, “According to the view regarded as self-evident today . . . the ‘nature’ in the rationalis natura of human beings is ‘nature’ as an univocal generic concept, which human beings share with other animals and other things of this natural world, and human beings are said to belong to the natural (physical) world.” Inagaki, “Original Sin and Human Nature: A Consideration of the Concept of Nature in Thomas Aquinas,” in Nature in Medieval Thought, ed. Chumaru Koyama (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 112.

57 “Law . . . signifies a rule of action . . . applied indiscriminately to all kinds of action, whether animate or inanimate, rational or irrational. Thus we say, the laws of motion, of gravitation, of optics, or mechanics, as well as the laws of nature and of nations. And it is that rule of action, which is prescribed by some superior, and which the inferior is bound to obey.” William Blackstone, Commentaries on the Laws of England I, 24.

58 Hobbes reduces the “law of nature” to a general rule for self-preservation, i.e., a rule “by which a man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same.” Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 91.
Dictionary thus defines nature as “a primitive state of existence, untouched and uninfluenced by artificiality.” Correspondingly, the OED defines “natural” as “[f]ormed by nature; not subject to human intervention, not artificial.” This “primitivist” notion, applied to human nature, comes in two versions: nature is either a pristine ideal or a state of deprivation. Rousseau celebrates a pristine nature, whose goodness lies in untutored spontaneity, undeformed by convention. “Man is born free yet everywhere is in chains,” he laments. In this vein, the OED defines a “natural” thought, behavior, or expression as one that has “the ease or simplicity of nature; free from affectation, artificiality, or constraint; simple, unaffected, easy.”

By contrast, Hobbes posits a brutish, niggardly nature: the “State of Warre” that must be overcome through convention to ensure man’s survival and comfort. In Mill’s terms, the Stoics’ norm, “Follow nature!” (naturam sequere), is senseless, for “the duty of man is the same in respect to his own nature as in respect to the nature of all other things—namely, not to follow but to amend it.” In this vein, the OED includes a definition of “human nature” as mankind’s “basic character or disposition . . . thought of as fallible or flawed; (in later use) an action or pattern of behaviour that typifies or results from such a fallible character or disposition.”

With regard to an individual man, both the Rousseauean and Hobbesian primitivisms posit a sharp opposition between nature that a person has from birth and the effects (good or ill) of circumstance, constraint, and artifice. Thus, the OED contrasts “nature and nurture: heredity and environment respectively as influences on, or determinants of, a person’s

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personality or behaviour.” In Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, Prospero laments that the primitive Caliban is

A devil, a born devil, on whose nature
Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost . . .

Whether nature be good or ill, “natural” in this primitivist sense means, according to the *OED*, “[e]xisting or present by nature; inherent in the very constitution of a person or thing; innate; not acquired or assumed.”

St. Thomas does use *natura* in what may seem to be certain proto-primitivist senses. But he does not characterize nature and convention as being necessarily opposed, whether in the sense of convention being unnatural, or that of convention being necessary to overcome a brutish or niggardly nature. On the contrary, nature is a source, a principle of motion towards the activities and operations needed for the good of man in society. For this reason, as is discussed in Chapter IV, he affirms that *inclinatio naturalis* includes both things “entirely accomplished by nature” and things “accomplished by the apprehensive faculty,” such as “understanding, memory, and feeling,” which are the operations by which men achieve properly human ends.

For St. Thomas, because nature always acts for an end, natural spontaneity is not a good in itself. The natural inclination of man, properly speaking, is the inclination of man’s

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62 *Natura integra* means the pre-lapsarian state of man (as opposed to *natura corrupta*) (see below). See, e.g., *Lect. super Ioann.*, cap. 6, lect. 5. *Naturalis* can refer to what a man has from birth, what flows from nature alone, or a type of necessity distinct from the necessity of *coactio*. See, e.g., *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.623:147-54]. Neither virtue nor vice, properly speaking, is natural in the sense of being innate. Customs can be evil and art is distinct from nature. See, e.g., *SCG* II, cap. 23; *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 7.173] (nudity is “of natural right,” because clothing is discovered by art). He also recognizes a primordial state of “one liberty of all” (*omnium una libertas*) in which property is held in common and there is no slavery. Ibid. The phrase *omnium una libertas* is from Gratian, *Decretum*, d. 1, c. 7.
63 *ST* I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273]. See Chapter IV.
integral human nature. The natural inclination of a man as rational animal substance is not the free play of the various parts of his nature. Rather, his inclination is natural, properly speaking, only to the extent it is subject to reason. The notion of a radical freedom as the spontaneity of acting on animal impulse would be nonsense in St. Thomas’s understanding. Neither the animal spontaneity of indulging the sensitive appetites, nor the corporeal spontaneity of, say, falling (by accident) to one’s death, are natural to man as man. Instead, for St. Thomas, freedom is instrumental to the completion or fulfillment of that finis for the sake of which nature inclines.

Because man’s specific nature is rational, it includes the power of will. As further discussed in Chapter IV, his “natural” mode of achieving the ends of his nature is not a merely biological process; it is, instead, mediated by reason and freedom. St. Thomas distinguishes between the natural as something innate (innata), i.e., possessed from birth (a natu) and the natural as that which is not innate, but is according to nature. In other words, he distinguishes between natural as that which exists by nature alone (without human action) and natural as that which develops through human action in accordance with nature. In the latter sense, no one is born virtuous, but every man, as man, has a natural inclination to virtue and to act in accordance with virtue. Many of the human natural inclinations St. Thomas describes are toward things that are not in themselves innately possessed. These natural inclinations are simply unintelligible if nature is equated with what is innate.

3. Natura: neither physicalist nor primitive

If natura is taken in either of the foregoing senses—physicalist or primitivist—St. Thomas’s understanding of natural inclination will be fatally misinterpreted. Both of these
senses are at once too broad and too narrow. The first, physicalist sense, is too broad in that it lumps into *natura* and *naturalis* “everything that goes on” in the “natural world” without distinction between *natura* properly speaking and the phenomena of disorder, violence, death, which, for St. Thomas, are contrary to nature in the proper sense. It is also too narrow: it forces the many natural kinds and ends of St. Thomas’s philosophy into a single procrustean bed of material nature, thereby excluding teleology and neglecting (or refusing) to distinguish nature from its failures. The second, primitivist sense is too broad in this way: every untutored and undisciplined urge or impulse is either celebrated (or abhorred) as exclusively “natural.” For St. Thomas, by contrast, true human nature unfolds and flourishes through the acts of reason and will. Primitivist nature is also too narrow: it lops off the teleological directedness of St. Thomas’s *natura* in favor of a stunted, univocal nature of matter in “spontaneous” motion, unmediated by reason, virtue, or convention. If readers of *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 understand “nature” as the violent and gory realm of the irrational creatures, or as the unruly bodily urges of fallen humanity separate from a unified teleology of man, they already miss the point of *inclinatio naturalis*.

**C. Natura hominis: Natures in Conflict?**

What, for St. Thomas, is *human* nature? In many places, he seems to say that man has more than one nature. In *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, the threefold inclination corresponds to three “natures”: substantial, animal, and rational. St. Thomas elsewhere distinguishes between generic (animal) nature, specific (rational) nature, and individual nature (bodily
complexion). As explained above, individual human nature is readily distinguishable—it is simply nature as material, the temperamental variations of each numerically distinct instance of the formal kind. More difficult to explain is the relationship between man’s animal and rational “nature(s).” Is nature chiefly animality, while reason is somehow above—even at odds with—nature? Is reason the “pilot” of the body (in a crudely Platonic sense)? Also problematic is the notion of an even more basic nature which man has “in common with all substances.” Is substance some third thing? In terms of natural law, is the “inclination of man” (inclinatio hominis) St. Thomas references in q. 94, art. 2 the inclination of his body as a substance, or as animal, or as rational—or in some sense all three? Are these inclinations fundamentally in conflict? Does the rational inclination somehow take precedence over the “lower” inclinations?

The natural law literature is filled with discussions of whether the natural law is primarily “rational” or primarily “biological.” Viewed through the assumptions of modern philosophy, the notion that natural law could be “derived” from bodily functions or structures is duly deemed discredited. On the other hand, natural law theories that minimize the biological in favor of practical reason are derided as “natural law without nature,” in Pamela Hall’s description of Finnis’s project. Others, such as Jean Porter, emphasize “nature as

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64 ST I-II, q. 46, a. 5 [Leon. 6.295]: “Potest enim natura alicuius hominis considerari vel secundum naturam generis, vel secundum naturam speciei, vel secundum complexionem propriam individui”; ST I-II, q. 10, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 6.84].
65 In V Ethic., lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:59-60]: “Attenditur autem in homine duplex natura.”
66 See, e.g., John Finnis, Natural Law and Natural Rights, 48 (describing the “ridiculous perverted faculty argument”).
67 Pamela Hall, Narrative and the Natural Law: An Interpretation of Thomistic Ethics (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 16.
reason” (*natura ut ratio*), downplaying or relativizing the biological. These debates seem to presuppose that, for St. Thomas, reason and the animality of human nature are opposed. In certain contexts, St. Thomas does seem to exemplify this dualistic strain of thought. He says, for example, that “nature in man is divided against reason.” But the natural inclination of man (*inclinatio inest homini*) described in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 is a unity more complex than the inclination of a merely animal substrate upon which reason somehow operates. Instead, man’s nature paramountly includes reason and his natural inclination is paramountly rational.

1. **Natura in common with all substances**

St. Thomas describes the first layer of man’s threefold natural inclination in q. 94, a. 2 as follows: “In man there is first of all an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances” (*inest primo inclinatio homini ad bonum secundum naturam in qua communicat cum omnibus substantiis*). What things are included in this broadest category of inclination? In general, he notes, “every substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature” (*quaelibet substantia appetit conservationem sui esse secundum suam naturam*). Even inanimates have a natural inclination to self-preservation according to their mode. But the examples he gives are

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69 *ST* I-II, q. 31, a. 7 [Leon. 6.221]: “natura in homine secundum quod condividitur rationi, id scilicet quod est commune homini et aliis, praeipsue quod rationi non obedit.” Cf. *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “omnes inclinationes quarumque partium humanae naturae . . . secundum quod regulantur ratione, pertinent ad legem naturalem.”

70 *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170].

71 All substances are naturally inclined to remain in being. *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170] (“quaelibet substantia appetit conservationem sui esse secundum suam naturam”); *ST* II-II, q. 64, a. 5 [Leon. 9.71-72]
higher on the chain of being. Although he does not say all living substances, he identifies this inclination with things related to the preservation of life: “by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of preserving human life (vita hominis), and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law.” Suicide is the most obvious example of something that is contrary to man’s natural inclination at this level. Similarly, because the natural ends of eating are the health of the body and to enable man to go about his business, self-starvation and eating to excess both are contrary to the natural law.

But there are also certain natural inclinations which man shares with inanimate natures—i.e., with all bodies. Although St. Thomas does not mention it in connection with natural law, man certainly shares with all heavy bodies the inclination to move toward the center of the earth. For man, as an animal, this inclination is obviously a “default” which can be, up to a point, overridden by locomotion. Considered only as a body, each human being has a natural inclination to seek the center of the earth, but if, by accident, a man falls off a ladder straight to the ground, he is not moving according to his human nature.

(“naturaliter quaelibet res seipsam amat, et ad hoc pertinet quod quaelibet res naturaliter conservat se in esse et corrumpentibus resistit quantum potest”).

It should first be noted that “substance” does not comprise a free-standing “bucket” of inclinations, where “animal” and “rational” are separate buckets. Every being is a substance (e.g., an animal is itself a substance).

Eating follows upon man’s generic nature. Lex . . . naturalis nihil est allud quam conceptio homini naturaliter indita, qua dirigitur ad convenienter agendum in actionibus propriis, sive competant ei ex natura generis, ut generare, comedere, et hujusmodi.”

Stones and other heavy bodies have a natural inclination to be down (deorsum) or at the center. See Index. Man, as body, has the same inclination (to the extent the soul does not move him otherwise).

72 It should first be noted that “substance” does not comprise a free-standing “bucket” of inclinations, where “animal” and “rational” are separate buckets. Every being is a substance (e.g., an animal is itself a substance).

73 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “secundum hanc inclinationem, pertinent ad legem naturalem ea per quae vita hominis conservatur, et contrarium impeditur.” Plants are also living substances, which have life-sustaining nutritive powers in their own way. See ST I-II, q. 41 a. 3 [Leon. 6.273]; ST I, q. 59 a. 2; In De div. nom., cap. 4, lect. 3, 318 [Marietti 104]; In Rom., cap. 8, lect. 4, n. 660 [Marietti, 120].

74 ST II-II, q. 64, a. 5 [Leon. 9.74-75]: “quia naturaliter quaelibet res seipsam amat, et ad hoc pertinet quod quaelibet res naturaliter conservat se in esse et corrumpentibus resistit quantum potest. Et ideo quod aliquis seipsam occidat est contra inclinationem naturalem, et contra caritatem, qua quilibet debet seipsam diligere.”

75 Eating follows upon man’s generic nature. In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.967]: “Lex . . . naturalis nihil est allud quam conceptio homini naturaliter indita, qua dirigitur ad convenienter agendum in actionibus propriis, sive competant ei ex natura generis, ut generare, comedere, et hujusmodi.”

76 Stones and other heavy bodies have a natural inclination to be down (deorsum) or at the center. See Index. Man, as body, has the same inclination (to the extent the soul does not move him otherwise).
considered as a whole. It is against the natural law to leap off cliffs without a very good reason (or a very good parachute).

Another set of natural inclinations man has in common with other bodies is problematic for natural law purposes. Men, considered as bodies, are naturally inclined to corruption and death and are susceptible to inclinations caused by celestial bodies. Absent the gift of original justice, man’s merely bodily nature is thus at odds with the unity of his substantial nature. But the same corporeal properties that make man corruptible also make him capable of sexual reproduction, local motion, and touch, and of obtaining knowledge through the sense powers. Just as the iron matter of the knife is both susceptible to rust and necessary for cutting, so man’s bodily constitution has, as it were, the “double edge” of corruptibility and teleological necessity. Going even further, man shares certain natural inclinations with all substances as beings (whether corporeal or not). St. Thomas speaks of a number of natural inclinations that are common to every nature or every being, including inclinations to resist corruptions, to engage in operations fitting to a thing’s form, to attain

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77 Likewise, animal motion “non est violentum simpliciter, sed secundum quid.” ST I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 6.60]. Thomas follows Aristotle on this point. See ST I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 6.60]: “sicut philosophus dicit in VIII Physic., motus animalis quo interdum movetur animal contra naturalem inclinationem corporis, etsi non sit naturalis corpori, est tamen quodammodo naturalis animali, cui naturale est quod secundum appetitum moveatur. Et ideo hoc non est violentum simpliciter, sed secundum quid. Et similiter est dicendum cum aliquis inflectit membra contra naturalem dispositionem. Hoc enim est violentum secundum quid, scilicet quantum ad membrum particulare non tamen simpliciter, quantum ad ipsum hominem.” See also In III Sent., d. 22, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 1.

78 See De ver., q. 25, a. 7 [Leon. 22/3.743:58-60] (corruption of parts of the soul follows NI of natural bodily principles); ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116] (NI of matter according to universal nature is cause of corruption and defect, as distinct from NI of form by particular nature). See discussion of the naturalness of death and corruption in Chapter V.

79 See, e.g., ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116] (analogy of rust-prone iron knife and corruptible human bodily matter).
something similar to itself, and to operate according to that which is always and per se (not to what happens by chance), and to submit to a higher thing.80

How does nature-substance stand in relation to “the rest” of human nature? Human nature as a unity is discussed below, but here it should be noted that substance-nature is, more precisely, that nature “in which [man] communicates with all substances.” Communicatio here is usually translated as “has in common with,” but is also has the sense of “participate (in).”81 St. Thomas also uses the same verb with respect to man’s animal nature. This “communing” or “participation” of human nature with all substances and animals is a predicamental participation, not a physical union or transcendental participation.82 Man does not “become one with Nature.” Nor does he “participate” (in) a Platonic ideal “Substance” or “Animal.” Though the several levels of nature are distinguishable by reason, human nature in re includes lower natures.83

80 In III Sent., d. 29, q. 1, a. 7, ad 1 [Moos 3.942] (nature always inclines to that which is always and per se, not to what happens by chance); ST II-II, q. 141, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 10.122] (nature inclines to whatever is becoming to it); ST II-II, q. 64, a. 5 [Leon. 9.114] (each thing to naturally love itself and preserve itself in being and resist corruptions insofar as it can); ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170] (natural inclination of any thing to operation conveniens to itself according to form); ST I-II, q. 8, a. 1 [Leon. 6.68] (NI of every thing, insofar as it is being and substance, to good and to something similar and convenient); ST II-II, q. 133, a. 1 [Leon. 10.86-87] (NI of every thing to accomplish action commensurate with its power); ST II-II, q. 85, a. 1 [Leon. 9.215-16] (NI to submit to higher thing); ST I, q. 60, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 5.104] (NI of every thing to the good of the individual, species, and the absolutely universal good); ST I, q. 60, a. 4 [Leon. 5.103] (NI of each thing to seek its own good); De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:210-11] (Nature inclines to something similar to itself); ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154] (NI of all things to their respective proper acts and ends); In De div. nom., cap. 10, lect. 1, n. 858 [Marietti 321] (NI to things to proper ends called natural laws). See Index for additional examples.

81 Deferrari defines communicare as “participate in, take part or share in, have in common.”

82 E.g., ST I, q. 3, a. 5 [Leon. 4.43-44]: “omnia quae sunt in genere uno, communicant in quidditate, vel essentia generis, quod praedicatur de eis in eo quod quid.” On predicamental predication, see Gregory T. Doolan, Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 200.

83 The distinction can also be expressed as that between nature in a “precise” sense and an “absolute” sense. De ver., q. 22, a. 5, ad s.c. 6 [Leon. 22/3.626:363-69]: “voluntas dividitur contra appetitum naturalem cum praecisione sumptum, id est qui est naturalis tantum, sicut homo contra id quod est animal tantum; non autem dividitur contra appetitum naturalem absolute, sed includit ipsum, sicut homo includit animal.” According to Joseph Owens, precise abstraction (i.e., “abstraction with precision”) “exclusively cuts off or excludes or prescinds from the non-common characteristics.” Owens, Elementary Christian Metaphysics, 63.
2. Generic nature

*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 describes a second level of inclination:

> [T]here is in man an inclination to things that pertain to him more specially, according to that nature which he has in common with other animals: and according to this [inclination], those things are said to belong to the natural law, “which nature has taught to all animals,” such as the union of male and female, education of children, and similar things.⁸⁴

Although this animal level of nature is “more special” (*magis specialis*) to man, i.e., closer to being man’s proper nature, than the nature he shares with all substances, it is nevertheless distinct from his “specific nature.” Animal nature, in other words, is what St. Thomas elsewhere calls man’s “generic nature” (*natura generis*).⁸⁵ Man’s generic nature is the nature he has “insofar as he is an animal” (*inquantum est animal*).⁸⁶ Some things are *naturalior* (“more natural”) for a man with respect to the generic nature or the specific nature. For example, desire is more natural than anger with respect to man as an animal (because man has a natural inclination to bodily self-preservation and perpetuation of the species), while anger is more natural to man as a rational being (inaasmuch as anger requires rational inference).⁸⁷

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For example, taken with precision, “what is common to all individual men now appears as ‘humanity,’” taken in the abstract as the form or perfection that makes individual men.” Ibid. It is not the same as substantial form, in that substantial form’s subject is matter, while the precise abstraction includes both matter and form, but only as taken in the abstract. Ibid. Thus, in Thomas’s example, “man,” taken absolutely in reference to a man, includes the animal, but “animal,” taken with presicion, excludes the specific difference of rationality which is not common to all animals.

⁸⁴ *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “inest homini inclinatio ad aliqua magis specialia, secundum naturam in qua communicat cum ceteris animalibus. Et secundum hoc, dicuntur ea esse de lege naturali quae natura omnia animalia docuit, ut est conjunctio maris et feminae, et educatio liberorum, et similia.”

⁸⁵ *ST* I-II, q. 46, a. 5 [Leon. 6.295]. *Genus* sometimes refers to “human kind.” E.g., *ST* I-II, q. 98, a. 3: “lex vetus . . . disponebat ad salutem perfectam generis humani.” But as a natural law term, *genus* means only animal nature.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid. Although anger is in the irascible faculty, *ST* I-II, q. 46, a. 3 [Leon. 6.296], Thomas also says that anger, as an “appetite for vengeance” (*appetitus vindictae*), requires a rational act of comparison of the punishment to be inflicted and the harm to be punishment. “Conferre autem et syllogizare est rationis. Et ideo ira est quodammodo cum ratione.” *ST* I-II, q. 46, a. 4 [Leon. 6.294].
Different actions are consequent on a thing’s generic nature or specific nature, respectively. For example, a magnet falls downwards by virtue of its generic nature, but attracts iron by virtue of its specific nature. Man, as a rational creature, has both a natural conception and, following on this conception, a natural inclination, “whereby the action befitting the genus or species is rendered proportionate to the end.” The natural law is nothing other than this natural conception “instilled into man, whereby he is guided to act in a befitting manner in his proper "conveniens" actions.” As discussed in Chapter VII, “natural conception” (conceptio naturalis) here is within human nature; it is not a psychological act. But my concern in this chapter is with natura. Man, however, has both a generic nature and a specific nature. The natural law guides him “to beget, to eat, and the like [et similia]” in accord with this generic nature, while it guides him to “reason and so forth” in accord with his specific nature.

Certain things are proportionate to man’s nature at each level. Correspondingly, man’s nature inclines towards those things that are fitting (conveniens) to each level. For example, at the animal level, the union of male and female (without further specification) is fitting to man’s generic nature. But monogamy is fitting to him as a rational animal. In this way, acts of polygamy and certain other sins (e.g., acts of fornication or intemperance) are

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88 In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.967].
89 Ibid.: “quibus operatio conveniens generi sive speciei reddatur competens fini.”
90 Ibid.: “naturaliter indita, qua dirigitur ad convenienter agendum in actionibus propriis.”
91 In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.967]: “Lex . . . naturalis nihil est aliud quam conceptio homini naturaliter indita, qua dirigitur ad convenienter agendum in actionibus propriis, sive competant ei ex natura generis, ut generare, comedere, et hujusmodi; sive ex natura speciei, ut ratiocinari, et similia.”
92 ST I-II, q. 10, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 6.84]: “naturae semper respondet unum, proportionatum tamen naturae. Naturae enim in genere, respondet aliquid unum in genere; et naturae in specie acceptae, respondet unum in specie.”
93 In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1 [Parma 7/2.918]: “natura hominis ad aliquid inclinat dupliciter. Uno modo quia est conveniens naturae generis; et hoc est commune omnibus animalibus: alio modo quia est conveniens naturae differentiae qua species humana abundat a genere, inquantum est rationalis; sicut actus prudentiae et temperantiae.”
inconveniens to man’s rational nature, but conveniens to his generic nature considered in abstraction from his whole nature. But certain sins (e.g., “the lying together of men”) are against both animal and rational nature.94

In ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, at the animal level, St. Thomas mentions only the union of male and female and the education of children. But what are the “other things” (similia) that he references? Reading between the lines, the most obvious one is the procreation of children (he mentions only education). St. Thomas’s quote from the Digest is clearly an abbreviation of a common stock quotation, which he does not bother to quote in full, or even cite.95

Presumably the other things proportionate to man’s generic nature are those things relating to the sensitive appetite and the preservation of the individual. He associates, for example food, drink, and sleep with the preservation of the individual animal.96 St. Thomas also says that

94 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3, ad 2 [Leon. 7.171]: “concubitus masculorum.” Cf. ST I-II, q. 31, a. 7 [Leon. 6.221-22] (cannibalism, bestiality, and “eating earth and coals,” are against both rational and animal nature).

95 Kevin Flannery conjectures that the procreation of children belongs at the level of substance-nature, not animal nature. Noting that Thomas mentions the education of children in, but omits the generation of children from, the second tier, he argues that Thomas understands generation as something man has in common with all substances. Flannery, “Law of Survival,” 154, n. 20; see also Lawrence Dewan, “St. Thomas and the Divine Origin of Law: Some Notes,” Civilizar: Ciencias Sociales y Humanes 8 (2008): n. 27: “The second level of inclination in that text is not about reproduction, for that is common to all substances, but about the perfect animal mode of reproduction.” Even if we assume that all substances “reproduce” in some way—Do inanimates, other than perhaps fire, “reproduce”?—it seems unnecessary to subsume the generation of children to the pan-substantial plane. The phrase “qua omnia animalia docuit” is from Ulpian, for whom the union of male and female includes the begetting (successio) of children. Ulpian’s text is lapidary for Thomas and his readers. Thomas need not write out the whole text of the Digest, I.1.1.3 to make the point. Thomas simply says “union of male and female, and the education of children, and similar things.” Elsewhere, Thomas directly links procreation with the coniunctio of male and female. See, ST I-II, q. 100, a. 5 [Leon. 7.211] (“in personam coniunctam quantum ad propagationem prolis”); In II Sent., d. 20, q. 1, a. 2 [Mand. 2.507] (“non poterat completi generatio humana nisi per conjunctionem maris et feminae”). Cf. In V Ethic., lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:67-68]: “coniunctio maris et feminae, educatio natorum, et alia huismodi.” By animals, Thomas probably means perfect animals—that those that reproduce by sexual union—not imperfect animals or plants, as Dewan notes. These animals are, for Ulpian, “land animals, sea animals and birds as well” and “wild beasts.” Dig. I.1.3: “Ius naturale est, quod natura omnia animalia docuit: nam ius istud non humani generis proprium, sed omnium animalium, quae in terra, quae in mari nascuntur, avium quoque commune est. Hinc descendit maris atque feminae coniunctio, quam nos matrimonium appellamus, hinc liberorum procreatio, hinc educatio: videmus etenim cetera quoque animalia, feras etiam istius iuris peritia censeri.”

96 ST I-II, q. 31, a. 7 [Leon. 6.221-22]: “ea quae pertinent ad conservationem corporis, vel secundum individuam, ut cibus, potus, lectus, et huismodi.”
temperance is contrary to man’s animal nature (but is consonant with his rational nature).\footnote{ST II-II, q. 141, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 10.122].} Eating food is, of course, consequent upon animal nature.\footnote{In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.967]: “[Lex naturalis est] conceptio homini . . . qua dirigitur ad convenienter agendum in actionibus propriis, sive competant ei ex natura generis, ut generare, comedere, et hujusmodi.”} The natural inclination of an animal to eat is a specification of the more universal inclination to self-preservation. Man, as an animal, does not have the ability to preserve himself by photosynthesis (as a plant does) or by ignition of adjacent flammable materials (as fire does).

3. Generic and Specific Nature Compared

How does the generic nature stand in relation to the specific nature? Man’s generic and specific “natures” are in a sense distinguishable, but they are not distinct \textit{in re}. A single human nature comprises both that which man has in common with other animals and that which is proper to man as man. Generic nature, or “common nature” as he also calls it, does not exist by itself. There is no pure animal that is not also a man or a cow, for example.\footnote{SCG II, cap. 52, n. 3 [Leon. 13.387]: “Natura communis, si separata intelligatur, non potest esse nisi una: quamvis habentes naturam illum plures possint inveniri. Si enim natura animalis per se separata subsisteret, non haberet ea quae sunt hominis vel quae sunt bovis: iam enim non esset animal tantum, sed homo vel bos. Remotis autem differentiis constitutivis specierum, remanet natura generis indivisa: quia eaedem differentiae quae sunt constitutivae specierum sunt divisivae generis.”} Rather, human nature is “double” (\textit{duplex}), not in the sense that man has an animal nature “down there” and separate human nature “up here.” Also, in a sense, the specific nature “overflows” (\textit{abundat}) the generic nature inasmuch as it is rational.\footnote{In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1 [Parma 7/2.918]; In IV Sent., d. 21, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1.} There is also a sense in which the specific nature shapes or colors the generic nature. Generic nature inclines differently in different species in ways befitting each one. For example, human nature, even at the level of animality, inclines to monogamy—similar to the turtledove (St. Thomas’s example of a monogamous animal), but different from, say, the elk (the dominant bull mates...
with many females). Children, St. Thomas explains, need one father as well as one mother.

4. Man’s Proper Nature: natura specialis

In contrast to the nature man has in common with other animals or substances, there is a level of nature that is proper to man.

Thirdly, there is in man an inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him: thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society: and in this respect, whatever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law; for instance, to shun ignorance, to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things regarding the above inclination.

This proper nature corresponds to what St. Thomas elsewhere calls “specific nature.” The specific nature is the nature that makes man different from all other animals and all other substances—i.e., the specific difference. The proposition, “Man is a rational being,” is self-

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101 *In IV Sent.*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968]: “Pluralitas ergo uxorum quamvis non sit contra jus naturale tertio modo acceptum, est tamen contra jus naturale secundo modo acceptum, quia jure divino prohibetur; et etiam contra jus naturale primo modo acceptum, ut ex dictis patet, quod natura dictat animali cuilibet secundum modum convenientem suae speciei; unde etiam quaedam animalia, in quibus ad educationem proleis requiritur sollicitudo utriusque, scilicet maris et feminae, naturali instinctu servant conjunctionem unius ad unum, sicut patet in turturra et columba, et hujusmodi.” Cf., *In IV Sent.*, d. 26, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1 [Parma 7/2.918]. Also, humans “educate” their “children” (*liberi*) in a different way from the rearing (*educatio*) of young (*fetus*, *genimen*) in other animals. Cf. *SCG* III, cap. 122, n. 6 [Leon. 14.379] (*fetus*); *ST* II-II, q. 154, a. 2 [Leon. 10.218] (*fetus*); *Catena in Matth.*, cap. 23, lect. 11 [Vivès 1.358], in quot. from St. Hilarius (*genima viperarum*). In q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170] he uses the genitive plural of *liber*, -i (“children” which, as human, are “free”). He is paraphrasing Isidore’s longer definition of *ius naturale* (as quoted by Gratian). See Gratian, *Decretum* D.1, c. 7: “liberorum successio et educatio.” Thomas sometimes uses the term *proles* or *nati* in reference to children, e.g., *In IV Sent.*, d. 39, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.1024] (“principalis matrimoni bonum est proles ad cultum Dei educanda”); *In V Ethic.*, lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/3.305:67-68] (“educatio natorum”).

102 *ST* II-II, q. 154, a. 2 [Leon. 10.218] (“ad educationem hominis non solum requiritur cura patris, a quo est instruens et defendendus, et in bonis tam interioribus quam exterioribus promovendus”); *SCG* III, cap. 122, n. 6 [Leon. 14.379] (“in specie humanae feminae minime sufficiet sola ad prolis educationem: cum necessitas humanae vitae multa requirat quae per unum solum parari non possunt”).

103 *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “Tertio modo inest hominii inclinatio ad bonum secundum naturam rationis, quae est sibi propria, sicut homo habet naturalem inclinationem ad hoc quod veritatem cognoscat de Deo, et ad hoc quod in societate vivat. Et secundum hoc, ad legem naturalem pertinent ea quae ad huiusmodi inclinationem spectant, utpote quod homo ignorantiam vitet, quod alios non offendat cum quibus debet conversari, et cetera huiusmodi quae ad hoc spectant.”
evident “since who says ‘man,’ says ‘a rational being.’” As Bernard Inagaki notes, “the anima rationalis that is the form specifying human beings ‘excels corporeal matter in its power by the fact that it has an operation and a power in which corporeal matter has no share whatever.’” In a sense, in man, animal nature stands as matter relative to form (matter : form :: animality : rationality). But the matter-form relationship does not mean that the “material content” of the natural law is somehow man’s natural (i.e., animal) inclinations, which must be ordered by practical reason, as Oscar Brown argues. Man’s rationality is as much human nature as his animality. Indeed, rationality is more his nature than is animality: “Intellect and reason are chiefly (potissime) the nature of man,” as St. Thomas states.

5. Powers as Natures

St. Thomas not only speaks of the rational and animal parts of nature, but also attributes nature and natural inclination of each power of the soul: “every power of the soul is a nature and naturally inclines to something.” Thus, the concupiscible power considered in abstraction from human nature as a whole is itself a nature and its inclination is, in a sense, natural. But the nature that is the part is obviously not the nature that is the whole man. Any

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104 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.169]: “Sicut ista propositio, homo est rationale, est per se nota secundum sui naturam, quia qui dicit hominem, dicit rationale, et tamen ignoranti quid sit homo, haec propositio non est per se nota.”
105 Inagaki, “Original Sin,” 112, quoting ST I, q. 76, q. 1, ad 4 [Leon. 5.210].
106 See In VII Meta., lect. 9, nn. 1460-81 [Marietti 431-35].
107 Brown, Natural Rectitude, 40: “the sum total of such natural [i.e., animal] urgings . . . is identical with natural law in the strict sense—or, at the very least, to the material content of the natural law.”
108 ST I-II, q. 31, a. 7 [Leon. 6.221-22]: “Intellectus et ratio est potissime hominis natura.” Thomas speaks in several texts of “natural reason” and “the dictate of natural reason.”ST I-II, q. 100, a. 11 [Leon. 7.220] (“praecipta moralia ex ipso dictamine naturalis rationis efficaciam habent, etiam si nunquam in lege statuuntur.”) For ratio naturalis or cognitio naturalis in the TL alone, see ST I-II, q. 98, a. 6; q. 100, a. 1 arg. 3; q. 100, a. 1 (twice); q. 100, a. 3; q. 100, a. 3, ad 1; q. 100, a. 4, ad 1; q. 100, a. 5, ad 4; q. 104, a. 1; q. 104, a. 4, ad 2; q. 108, a. 2, ad 1. Cf. ST II-II, q. 85, a. 1 [Leon. 9.215].
109 De ver., q. 25, a. 2, ad 8 [Leon. 22/3.734:237-44]: “concupiscere appetitu animali, ad solam concupiscibilem pertinet; sed concupiscere appetitu naturali, pertinet ad quamlibet potentiam: nam quaelibet potentia animae natura quaedam est, et naturaliter in aliquid inclinatur.”
intelligible thing is a nature, but a man’s eye is not the whole man. This distinction is critical for understanding what a “natural inclination” is for man. There is much confusion about this point, for a few texts in the treatise on law seem to suggest that the inclinations of man’s lower powers—whether ruled by reason or not—are the natural inclinations of the human being. In *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, he writes,

> Just as reason has dominion over and rules the other powers, so it is necessary for all the natural inclinations belonging to the other powers to be ordered in accord with reason. Hence, it is universally right for everyone that all the inclinations of men should be directed in accord with reason.111

Even if he intends to distinguish between “inclinations of man” and “natural inclinations,” he nevertheless seems to say that the inclinations of certain human powers, in abstraction from man as rational, are in themselves natural. Similarly, in q. 94, a. 2, ad 2 he uses the expression “all the inclinations of whatever parts of human nature.”112 Are all such inclinations *natural* in the proper sense? They are not. The sense of human natural inclination proper to natural law is natural inclination of man as an ordered whole (rational animal substance). The inclination of the concupiscible power may be natural with respect to itself as a power, but it is natural for the man only inasmuch as it is integrated into the unity of man’s nature as a rational being.

6. Natura unius: the Nature of the Whole Man

Man’s nature apparently has many levels, parts, and powers. But there is a single

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110 In discussing what is known *per se nota*, St. Thomas ascribes “nature” to a proposition. *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.169]: “propositio *homo est rationale*, est *per se nota* secundum sui naturam, quia qui *dicit hominem*, *dicit rationale*.”

111 *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 4, ad 3 [Leon. 7.172]: “sicut ratio in homine dominatur et imperat alii potentiis, ita oportet quod omnes inclinationes naturales ad alias potentias pertinentes ordinentur secundum rationem. Unde hoc est apud omnes communiter rectum, ut secundum rationem dirigantur omnes hominum inclinationes.”

112 *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “omnes inclinationes quaramcumque partium humanae naturae.”
human nature: rational animal substance. As we have seen, for St. Thomas, human nature (natura hominis) can mean either “that which is proper to man” (i.e., reason) or “that nature which is common to man and other animals.” In the former sense, every sin is against nature; in the latter, only certain “unnatural crimes” (vitia contra naturam)—e.g., “the lying together of men” (concubitus masculorum)—are against nature.\(^{113}\) At first this text may suggest that there are two, really distinct human natures. But it must be understood that the terms “proper” and “common” here are relative terms. Man’s specific nature is, as it were, the “tip of the human iceberg.” Along with what he has in common with other animals, man has something proper to himself “insofar as he is rational.”\(^{114}\) To continue the iceberg metaphor, all other animals are entirely “below the waterline.” Man has certain things “in common” with all other animals. Whatever man has above the waterline of animality is his specific difference—proper to him among all animals. If man were the only animal—i.e., a unique genus in the way that each angel is unique—there would be no need to distinguish between animality and rationality.

St. Thomas sometimes says that human nature is “double” (duplex) or “is said in two ways” (dupliciter dicitur).\(^{115}\) These terms better convey the accidental character of the nature’s multiplicity relative to its underlying unity. The “duplicity” of human nature comes to light in comparison to irrational animals. Man’s rational nature “belongs to man properly

\(^{113}\) ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3, ad 2 [Leon. 7.171].

\(^{114}\) See ST I-II, q. 93, a. 6 [Leon. 7.166]: “rationalis natura, cum eo quod est commune omnibus creaturis, habet aliquid sibi proprium inquantum est rationalis . . . .”

\(^{115}\) In II Sent., d. 28, q. 1, a. 1 [Mand. 2.718] (“duplex”); De ver., q. 13, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 22/2.418-197] (“dupliciter dicitur”).
inasmuch as he is man.”

St. Thomas also speaks of the various parts of human nature in terms of one part being “in” the other part. Man is “that which which has reason in a sensitive nature.”

Man’s specifically rational nature is, in a sense, “nested” within the lower orders of his nature. But reason is not encased within the other “natures” like a set of Russian dolls. Instead, man is a composite unity with a single substantial form which is not merely the vivifying form of the elemental body, but also intellect. The genus is matter in relation to specific form. Man is a single substance which includes the rational, the animal, and the corporeal in a single being. Because “man” includes “animal,” the distinction between man and animal is “precisive” (*cum praecisione sumptum*) not absolute. This being, in turn, comprises all the parts and powers of human nature. Man’s only substantial form is the intellectual soul, which, “as it virtually contains the sensitive and nutritive souls, so does it virtually contain all inferior forms, and itself alone does whatever the imperfect forms do in other things.”

The parts of an animal are not separate species, but have diverse dispositions with respect to the same intellectual soul.

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116 *In V Ethic.*, lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:59-64]. “Attenditur autem in homine duplex natura. Una quidem, secundum quod est animal, quae est sibi alisque animalibus communis; alia autem est natura hominis quae est propria sibi inquantum est homo, prout scilicet secundum rationem discernit turpe et honestum.”

117 *In VII Meta.*, lect. 9, n. 1463 [Marietti 431]: “Nam homo est, quod habet rationem in natura sensitiva.” See McInerny, “The Principles of Natural Law,” 5: “[T]he ‘animal’ part of our nature is always a layer and never autonomous.”

118 ST I, q. 76, a. 6, ad 1 [Leon. 5.229]: “Una enim et eadem forma est per essentiam, per quam homo est ens actu, et per quam est corpus, et per quam est vivum, et per quam est animal, et per quam est homo.”

119 *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 5, ad s. c. 6 [Leon. 22/3.626:363-69]. See note 82 above for explanation of “precisive.”


121 ST I, q. 76, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 5.228].
If man’s nature is his rational soul, what then is “natural” for man? A thing “is said to be natural to a thing which befits it in respect of its substance. And this is that which of itself is in a thing.”\(^{122}\) The form, in turn, “through which man is man, is itself reason and intellect. Whence in that which is fitting to [man] according to reason and intellect, he tends naturally. The good however of whatever power is fitting to man according to reason . . .”\(^{123}\) Reason, however, is not a tyrant. It concerns itself with the good of the whole being as a rational animal bodily substance. Thus the rational appetite, i.e., the will, tends towards the good in general. In what does this general good consist? The good for man

is all those things which belong to the willer according to his nature. For it is not only things pertaining to the will that the will desires, but also that which pertains to each power, and to the entire man. Wherefore man wills naturally not only the object of the will, but also other things that are appropriate to the other powers; such as the knowledge of truth, which befits the intellect; and to be and to live and other like things which regard the natural well-being \([\text{consistentiam naturalem}];\) all of which are included in the object of the will, as so many particular goods.\(^{124}\)

7. **Substantial Nature and Natural Inclination**

This triad of goods which the will naturally wills—to be, to live, and to know the truth—corresponds to man’s threefold natural inclination noted in \(ST\) I-II, q. 94, a. 2. As Michael Crowe explains, the threefold inclination of man in \(ST\) I-II, q. 94, a. 2

does not correspond to any real division in the nature of man. Man is not made up of three natures, substantial, sensitive and rational, successively superimposed one upon the other. The nature of man is one, and the single rational soul performs, \textit{eminentiori modo}, the functions of

\(^{122}\) \(ST\) I-II, q. 10, a. 1 [Leon. 6.83]: “dicitur natura quaelibet substantia, vel etiam quodlibet ens. Et secundum hoc, illud dicitur esse naturale rei, quod convenit ei secundum suam substantiam.”

\(^{123}\) \textit{In II Sent.}, d. 39, q. 2, a. 1 [Mand. 2.992]: “Forma autem per quam homo est homo, est ipsa ratio et intellectus. Unde in illud quod est conveniens sibi secundum rationem et intellectum, naturaliter tendit. Bonum autem cujuslibet virtutis est conveniens homini secundum rationem: quia talis bonitas est ex quadam commensuratione actus ad circumstantias et finem, quam ratio facit.”

\(^{124}\) \(ST\) I-II, q. 10, a. 1 [Leon. 6.83]: “illa quae conveniunt volenti secundum suam naturam. Non enim per voluntatem appetimus solum ea quae pertinent ad potentiam voluntatis; sed etiam ea quae pertinent ad singulas potentias, et ad totum hominem. Unde naturaliter homo vult non solum objectum voluntatis, sed etiam alia quae conveniunt alis potentiiis, ut cognitionem veri, quae convenit intellectui; et esse et vivere et alia huimodii, quae respiciunt consistentiam naturalem; quae omnia comprehenduntur sub objecto voluntatis, sicut quadam particularia bona.”
man considered as a substance or an animal. Reason, then, enters at all three levels of natural inclination.\footnote{Crowe, Changing Profile, 178.}

The principle of man’s natural inclination (called “something divine”) is substantial form.\footnote{In VII Ethic., lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:164-9]: “omnia habent naturaliter in se ipsis quiddam divinum, sc. inclinationem naturae, quae dependet ex principio primo; vel etiam ipsam formam, quae est huius inclinationis principium.”}

In the sense proper to nature in Aquinas’s “natural law,” therefore, \textit{inclinatio naturalis} is the inclination of man “according to his form” as man.\footnote{In VII Ethic., lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:164-9]: “omnia habent naturaliter in se ipsis quiddam divinum, sc. inclinationem naturae, quae dependet ex principio primo; vel etiam ipsam formam, quae est huius inclinationis principium.”} Man’s inclination, above all, is to act in accord with reason.\footnote{In VII Ethic., lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:164-9]: “omnia habent naturaliter in se ipsis quiddam divinum, sc. inclinationem naturae, quae dependet ex principio primo; vel etiam ipsam formam, quae est huius inclinationis principium.”} Aquinas does say that the inclinations of the various parts—that is, powers—of man’s nature must be subordinated to reason. But the natural inclination of a part (or power) of man, in itself, is not the natural inclination of man (\textit{inclinatio hominis}). The threefold inclination of man set forth in \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 2 is not a description of three different natures which must be regulated by something above or outside of nature. The inclinations man has in common with all substances and animals are not, by themselves, “natural” inclinations with respect to man except as they are integrated into the unity of man’s rational nature.

For Aquinas, as for Aristotle, nature is a principle of motion “in that in which it is essentially and not accidentally.”\footnote{ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170]: “cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis, naturalis inclinatio inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem. Et hoc est agere secundum virtutem.”} As noted, if a man by mishap falls off a ladder straight to the ground, he is not moving according to his human nature but only according to the nature of a body as body.\footnote{ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170]: “cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis, naturalis inclinatio inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem. Et hoc est agere secundum virtutem.”} Similarly, the inclinations of a man’s several appetites are in themselves

\footnote{In VII Ethic., lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:164-9]: “omnia habent naturaliter in se ipsis quiddam divinum, sc. inclinationem naturae, quae dependet ex principio primo; vel etiam ipsam formam, quae est huius inclinationis principium.”}

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\footnote{In VII Ethic., lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:164-9]: “omnia habent naturaliter in se ipsis quiddam divinum, sc. inclinationem naturae, quae dependet ex principio primo; vel etiam ipsam formam, quae est huius inclinationis principium.”}
natural, but they are natural to the man *per se* only to the extent they are subordinated to reason in the unity of man’s rational nature.\(^{131}\) Man’s natural inclination, properly speaking, is only to what is good and right *for man*. “To say that natural inclination is not upright (*recta*), is to derogate from the author of nature.”\(^{132}\) The inclinations of any man’s several appetites are in themselves natural, but they are natural to a man *per se* only to the extent they are subordinated to reason in the unity of man’s rational animal nature. The “inclination of the nature of man insofar as he is man never contradicts the inclinations of virtue, but is conformed to them.”\(^{133}\) Death, disorder, unruly appetite, and every vice and sin are contrary to man’s natural inclination in the proper sense.\(^{134}\)

St. Thomas illustrates the distinction between the natural inclination of man and the natural inclination of a part or power of man in his discussion of the virtue of temperance. It is objected that temperance is not a virtue, “For no virtue goes against the inclination of nature, since ‘there is in us a natural aptitude for virtue’ . . . . Now temperance withdraws us from pleasures to which nature inclines . . . .”\(^{135}\) In response, he makes clear that the natural inclination of human nature is toward the rational, to which man’s animality is subject:

Nature inclines everything to whatever is becoming to it. . . . Since, however, man as such is a rational being, it follows that those pleasures are becoming to man which are in accordance with reason. From such pleasures temperance does not withdraw him, but from those which are contrary to reason. Wherefore it is clear that temperance is not contrary to the inclination of human nature, but is in accord with it.\(^{136}\)

\(^{131}\) *ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 6, ad 3 [Leon. 7.158]: “Et . . . si consideretur inclinatio sensualitatis prout est in aliis animalibus, sic ordinatur ad bonum commune, idest ad conservationem naturae in specie vel in individuo. Et hoc est etiam in homine, prout sensualitas subditur rationi.”

\(^{132}\) *ST* I, q. 60, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.98]: “Dicere . . . quod inclinatio naturalis not sit recta, est derogare auctori naturae.”

\(^{133}\) *In III Sent.*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 3 [Moos 3.929]: “inclinatio naturae hominis inquantum est homo, nunquam contradicit inclinationi virtutis, sed est ei conformis.”

\(^{134}\) *ST* I-II, q. 78, a. 3 [Leon. 6.73-74].

\(^{135}\) *ST* II-II, q. 141, a. 1, arg. 1 [Leon. 10.122].

\(^{136}\) *ST* II-II, q. 141, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 10.122]. “natura inclinat in id quod est conveniens unicuique. Unde homo naturaliter appetit delectationem sibi convenientem. Quia vero homo, inquantum huiusmodi, est
Man is rational in virtue of his substantial form, for “that is said to be natural to a certain thing which is fitting to it according to its form, through which it is constituted in such a nature, as fire naturally tends upwards.” According to this form, he “naturally tends towards that which is fitting to him according to reason and intellect.”

D. The Order of the Natural Inclinations Within and Beyond Human Nature

Man’s nature is that of a composite rational animal substance. His natural inclination, in the full and proper sense, is to act in accord with reason, because “the form through which man is man, is itself reason and intellect.” As is clear in St. Thomas’s discussions of temperance, man’s natural reason sometimes trumps what would otherwise be the natural inclination of his animal nature considered in abstraction from the whole man. This example seems to support the common stereotype of the natural inclinations “down there” which must be ordered—whipped into shape—by reason “up here.” Reason, on this standard account, is either above nature or is itself a higher, true nature, sharply distinguished from the nether nature, “red in tooth and claw.” It is further assumed, that if nature is taken to be the source or standard of natural law, the result will be commission of the dreaded “is-ought fallacy” or the mortal sin of “physicism.” Critics worry that to take nature for natural law’s

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\(^{137}\) In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 1 [Mand. 2.992]: “illud dicitur esse naturale alicui rei quod convenit sibi secundum conditionem suae formae, per quam in tali natura constituitur, sicut ignis naturaliter tendit sursum. Forma autem per quam homo est homo, est ipsa ratio et intellectus. Unde in illud quod est conveniens sibi secundum rationem et intellectum, naturaliter tendit.”

\(^{138}\) Ibid.

\(^{139}\) See note 47 above for examples.
benchmark is to usurp the role of prudence. The natural inclinations, considered severally, simply do not supply the right answers to moral questions in concrete circumstances.

1. Whence order?

But if reason is the standard, what, in turn, is reasonable? Is there no standard for reasonableness? St. Thomas is clear that reason “holds the principate” within human nature. But, for St. Thomas, the law is not simply whatever “pleases the prince.” The prince is bound by natural law. Legal and political rule is not tyranny. Likewise, within man, reason is not free to constitute the order of morality whole cloth. To be sure, prudence must match the best means to the ends of nature, but the “right ends of human life are fixed.”

The critics of traditional natural law theory are correct that the several natural law inclinations, understood in abstraction from man, do not supply right answers in complex moral situations. Reason apprehends only certain “basic goods” which it must then order into a morally coherent whole. But these critics take a narrow view of nature and the natural inclinations. Human natural inclination is not a set of atomic billiard balls which must be

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140 Ibid.
141 *ST* II-II, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 9.456]: “[ratio] principatum tenet in natura humana.”
142 Cf. *ST* I-II, q. 90, a. 1, arg. 3 [Leon. 7.149]: “movere ad agendum proprie pertinet ad voluntatem .... Ergo lex non pertinet ad rationem, sed magis ad voluntatem, secundum quod etiam iurisperitus dicit, *quod placuit principi, legis habet vigorem,*” citing CJC, *Institutes*, 1.2.6 (“quod principi placuit legis vigorem habet”).
143 *ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 15 [Leon. 8.363]. The order supplied by practical reasoning is the prudent selection of means to ends.
144 In this vein, Oscar Brown warns that “what none of the natural drives, individually or in assembly, can dictate is the due order of their arrangement among themselves. That is the work of reason in the discursive sense of ‘natural law’ in the secondary sense (*recta ratio, ius gentium*). All that a natural inclination, taken in conjunction with its immediate cognitive grasp, can certify is that its object or end is *a* human good and that—barring a deliberate decision to the contrary—that good will be pursued (at some psychic level and more or less explicitly).” Brown, *Natural Rectitude*, 37-38.
racked, broken, and pocketed by a human billiard player who operates on the nature from without.

Nature and the natural inclination of man constitute also an order in itself. Reason, operating within this order, apprehends the already given order of the natural inclinations: “according to the order of the natural inclinations is the order of the precepts of the natural law.”145 As St. Thomas explains in the commentary on the Ethics, there are several kinds of order.146 The order of the natural inclinations, as the term “natural” suggests, is a natural order. It is not an order of logic or human art. Nor is it an order that reason “makes in the operations of the will” (facit in operationibus voluntatis).147

But what, or where, is this natural order beyond the brute facts of the several natural inclinations to self-preservation, perpetuation of the species, gregariousness, and a certain yearning for God? What order is there among these things? In the contemporary natural law literature the debate over the meaning of the order of the natural inclinations centers on whether there is a highest good in relation to which the lesser goods are somehow instrumental or defeasible. The new natural law theorists criticize Thomists for an elitism because the highest good is claimed to be contemplation of speculative truths and Thomistic ethical teleology is considered to be consequentialist in a way not dissimilar to utilitarianism.

145 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “Secundum ordinem inclinationum naturalium, est ordo praecipitum legis naturae.”
146 In I Ethic., lect. 1, n. 1 [Leon. 47/1.4:14-24]: “Ordo autem quadrupliciter ad rationem comparatur. Est enim quidam ordo quem ratio non facit, sed solum considerat, sicut est ordo rerum naturalium. Alius autem est ordo, quem ratio considerando facit in proprio actu, puta cum ordinat conceptus suos ad invicem, et signa conceptuum, quae sunt voces significativae; tertius autem est ordo quem ratio considerando facit in operationibus voluntatis. Quartus autem est ordo quem ratio considerando facit in exterioribus rebus, quorum ipsa est causa, sicut in arca et domo.”
147 It should be noted that the order reason “makes” (facit) in ethical decisionmaking presupposes a prior, natural order which reason, “considering” (considerando), takes as the starting point of its prudential determination.
These theorists argue that no basic good can ever be “sacrificed”—i.e., directly attacked—for the sake of an allegedly higher or better good. The goods, they say, are incommensurable.\footnote{On the supposed incommensurability of basic goods, see, Robert George, \textit{Embryo}, 55-70.} Capable defenders of the traditional Thomist position, arguing from the standpoint of the \textit{finis ultimus} of man, retort that, for example, attending mass or subjecting oneself to a bloody martyrdom, if necessary, is more important than playing golf on Sunday (notwithstanding the importance of the basic good of “play”).\footnote{For spirited ridicule of the incommensurability thesis, see Russell Hittinger, \textit{A Critique of the New Natural Law}, 93-190.}

Other neo-Thomists characterize nature in minimalist terms. Martin Rhonheimer, for one, speaks of the “pure naturalness” of the human body and of “mere attraction between bodies.”\footnote{Martin Rhonheimer, “The Cognitive Structure of the Natural Law and the Truth of Subjectivity,” \textit{The Thomist} 67 (2003), 28: “reason has a relationship to the natural inclinations—because they are \textit{natural}—that mirrors that of the relationship between form and matter. . . . The naturalness of good, as it is formulated in the natural law . . . cannot be reduced to the simple naturalness of the individual natural inclinations and their goods, ends, and acts.” Ibid., 20: “at the level of their mere naturalness, does following the tendency to conserve oneself or the sexual inclination also mean following the good and end \textit{due} to man? How can we know what is not only \textit{specific} to these inclinations according to their particular nature but also \textit{due} to the person, that is to say, at the moment of following these inclinations, good for man \textit{as man}?"} As Matthew Levering explains, this is not the full picture of human nature:

\begin{quote}
[D]oes his [Rhonheimer’s] view of a level of ‘pure naturalness’ in the human body . . . properly take into account the hylomorphic unity of the (hierarchically ordered) inclinations in the human person? Since these bodies are \textit{human} bodies, the bodily natural inclinations are already caught up in the form of the spiritual soul in such a way that the person, as created, manifests a unified ordering, not a disjointed encounter in which the spiritual element must humanize the animal element.\footnote{Matthew Levering, “Natural Law and Natural Inclinations,” 175-176.}
\end{quote}

“There is no ‘mere nature,’” Levering continues, “that lacks an instrinsic teleological ordering.”\footnote{Ibid., 185. “There is no level of merely bodily inclination that must be harmonized by the rational soul’s ordering power.” Ibid., 186.} Levering’s focus, appropriately, is on the fundamental teleological ordination of
nature towards God: “There is no ‘nature’ that is not already tending or inclining, however distantly, toward the Good who creates and attracts every ‘nature.’”\(^{153}\)

Levering’s focus on man’s *finis ultimus* is salutary, but the element that is not sufficiently emphasized in these discussions is a description of the order that shows itself among the various inclinations, which in turn are ordered to God. As we have seen, the natural inclinations are not atomic billiard balls, each moving according to its own law or linear progression. They move in an orderly way, not simply each ordered in a direct line to God, but each to the other for the good of the whole. Natural order, for St. Thomas, is an order of parts within a whole.\(^{154}\)

But what else can be said about the order of the natural inclinations—that is, both the order of the natural inclinations within the man and the order of the whole man’s natural inclination towards a common good beyond his particular good? Two examples from the non-human realm suggest how this inquiry might proceed. One is tidal motion. An ocean or a tide is not a discrete substance in the way that an animal or an element is (if at all). One could argue that the upward pull of the tide towards the moon is a natural evil inasmuch as it takes water out of its natural place.\(^{155}\) Water, like a stone, is a heavy thing (*gravis*) which, as St. Thomas frequently notes, is naturally inclined to the center of the earth. But tidal motion, as the evidence of modern science suggests, is part of the ecological order of the biosphere or,

\(^{153}\) Ibid., 183.

\(^{154}\) On this point, Jean Porter moves in the right direction: “[W]e see that ‘nature as nature’ informs and directs ‘nature as reason’. Reason takes its starting points from inclinations which are not simply blind surges of desire, but intelligibly structured orientations toward goods connatural to the human creature. . . . ” Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), 262. “In this way, the natural law . . . stems from and respects the intelligible order of nature—not (primarily) by tracking a natural or moral order to be found in relations or states of affairs outside the creature, but by respecting and bringing coherence to the intelligible order of the human creature itself.” Ibid.

\(^{155}\) Cf. *In III De caelo*, lect. 5 n. 1 [Leon. 3.243] (in mixed body, prevailing element—light or heavy—determines place).
perhaps, in terms of philosophical cosmology, the perfection of the universe. The tides trump the natural inclination of water as water. But this trumping is not merely violent. The very heaviness of water gives the tides their heft, without which they would have no efficacy. Water has a passive potency for such motion.\(^{156}\) Another example is animal motion. Every animal is, at one level, a heavy body with a natural inclination to seek the center of the earth. The sparrow that suffers a stroke in mid-flight drops “like a rock”—and, thus, in a manner very similar to the way a helicopter drops when a broken linchpin destroys the human art that gives flight to its otherwise inert metallic mass. But local motion, against the grain of gravity, is natural for the animal.\(^{157}\)

2. Parts and Wholes

In these examples, it is easy to imagine a certain violence at work in the interstices of natural causality. Tidal motion is violence to water as heavy body; animal motion, it might seem, is violence to the animal body considered, likewise, as a heavy body. But in the case of the animal, the inference is mistaken, for the animal is a single substance. An animal’s parts are all ordered to and within a single whole. St. Thomas thus distinguishes between the natural inclination of simple bodies and that of an animal’s members. The animal, in this case, is man:

[T]he nature of man’s members or those of any other animal is not determined with respect to their relationship to some place but rather with respect to their relationship to some act; indeed, the position occupied by the parts of animals is in keeping with a suitable operation of the members. But the nature of heavy and of light things is determined to definite places, such

\(^{156}\) ST I, q. 105, a. 6, ad 1 [Leon. 5.477] (natural inclination of inferior body depends upon impression of celestial body).

\(^{157}\) ST I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 6.60] (animal motion is against natural inclination of body, but is natural to the animal); In III Sent., d. 22, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 1 (natural inclination of animate body is to move itself is contrary to the NI of the same body insofar as it is a body). On animal motion as a problem in the philosophy of nature, ancient and modern, see Richard Hassing, “Animals Versus the Laws of Inertia,” Review of Metaphysics 46 (1992): 29-61.
that all having the same nature also have numerically one natural inclination to numerically one place.  

But the order of the bodily members is not merely to the “mechanical” acts of locomotion or, say, the operation of tools. The “suitable [decentia] operation” of man’s members is within the context of the good for man. Commenting on a text of St. Paul about the many members of the one body of Christ, St. Thomas analogizes to the order of the members within a natural (i.e., animal) body. Each of an animal’s members “has a natural inclination to help the other members from blows. Similarly, the other believers, who are members of the mystical body, show solicitude for one another . . .” These examples illustrate a broader metaphysical principle that every part, by a kind of natural inclination, works for the good of the whole. The “principal inclination” of the part is to common action conducive to the common good. The natural inclination of each part, properly speaking, is to the common good of the whole. Each part “naturally loves the common good of the whole more than its own


159 In I Cor. [rep. vulg.], cap. 12, lect. 3, n. 751 [Marietti, 1.376]: “non solum praedicta membra operantur ad invicem, sed etiam per se invicem sunt sollicita in idipsum, id est in unitatem corporis conservandi. Et hoc quidem manifeste in corpore naturali apparet. Nam quodlibet membrum naturalem quamdam inclinationem habet ad iuvamentum aliorum membrorum. Unde et naturaliter homo opponit manum ad protegendum alia membra ab ictibus.”

160 Quodlibet I, q. 4, a. 3 [Leon. 25/2.188-89:66-82]: “unaquaque pars naturali quadem inclinatione operatur ad bonum totius, etiam cum periculo aut detrimento proprio: ut patet cum aliqua manum exponit gladio ad defensionem capitis, ex quo dependet salus totius corporis. Unde naturale est ut quaelibet pars suo modo plus amet totum quam seipsam. Unde et secundum hanc naturalem inclinationem, et secundum politicam virtutem, bonus civis mortis periculo se exponit pro bono communi. Manifestum est autem quod Deus est bonum commune totius universi et omnium partium eius. Unde quaelibet creatura suo modo naturaliter plus amat Deum quam seipsam: insensibilia quidem naturaliter, bruta vero animalia sensitive, creatura vero rationalis per intellectivum amorem, quae dilectio dicitur.”

161 ST II-II, q. 26, a. 3 [Leon. 8.211-12]: “Quod manifestetur ex opere, quaelibet enim pars habet inclinationem principalem ad actionem communem utilitati totius.”
particular good.” Natural inclinations, therefore, are not merely free-floating “urges.”

Correlatively, the part even has a natural inclination to expose itself to harm for the good of the whole. In general, then, the true and proper inclination of the part, considered as a part, is to the good of the whole.

In the case of human nature, one can say that some of the natural inclinations of man (as rational substance) limit, specify, or even trump his otherwise natural inclinations as an animal or a body. Just as animal motion trumps gravity, so, for man, St. Thomas can say that the virtue of temperance, though it restricts the animal appetites, is not contrary to the natural inclination of man as substance. But this limiting or trumping of the lower by the higher is not a sort of violence. Rather, the lower part—as a part—has itself a natural inclination to be subordinate to the higher inclination. This order of parts to and with a whole is a pre-given moral order and an involvement of reason within nature, rather than an imposition of reason from without.

3. Body and Soul

Consider the order that manifests itself at all levels of man’s natural inclination. Prior even to his inclination as a substance is the natural inclination of the body to be united to the soul (and of the soul to the body). There is no pure naturalness of the human body apart

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162 ST II-II, q. 26, a. 3 [Leon. 8.211-12]: “unaquaeque pars naturaliter plus amat commune bonum totius quam particulare bonum proprium.”
163 ST I, q. 60, a. 5 [Leon. 5.104].
164 ST II-II, q. 141, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 10.122]: “homo, inquantum huiusmodi, est rationalis, consequens est quod delectationes sunt homini convenientes quae sunt secundum rationem. Et ab his non retrahit temperantia, sed potius ab his quae sunt contra rationem. Unde patet quod temperantia non contrariatur inclinationi naturae humanae, sed convenit cum ea. Contrariatur tamen inclinationi naturae bestialis non subjectae rationi.”
165 See In II Sent., d. 32, q. 2, a. 3, expos. [Mand. 2.1059] (natural inclination of soul to be united to body); In IV Sent., d. 43, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 3, s.c. 2 [Parma 7/2.1067] (natural inclination of soul to be in union with
from its ensoulment, as shown by St. Thomas’s point that the “body” (i.e., corpse) of man no longer has a natural inclination to “its” soul once that body is dead, resolved into elements, or is devoured and converted to the flesh of another animal. The corpse is, in this case, only equivocally a body (just as a severed paw of an animal is only equivocally a paw). The dissolved or eaten “body” is no longer “a body,” but a multiplicity of smaller bodies which bear no resemblance to man.

4. The Humanly Natural Body

The human body, even considered as a body, is not merely a res extensa. There is more to it than the mere mickle and heft of, say, a rock. The elements, rather than following their default inclinations, “obey,” as it were, the animal soul, just as the lower appetites obey (obedit) reason. Though man generally has a natural inclination to remain safely on the ground, it hurts his body to fall hard onto the ground. His orientation to the ground is good, for the ground is the very fulcrum against which self-initiated locomotion is possible. The upright posture of man—intrinsically ordered to human speech, knowledge, and the arts—is “upright” only relative to natural place. The shape of the body and its members is ordered to animality and rationality in many other ways as well. The organs generate and sustain life. The hands and vocal cords are put to properly human uses. The human body also stands in a

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/body); ST I, q. 76, a. 1, ad 6 [Leon. 5.210] (natural inclination of soul and body is analogous to a light body’s inclination upwards); Super Mt. [rep. Leodegarii Bissuntini], cap. 22 l. 3 (natural inclination of soul to body).

166 In IV Sent., d. 43, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 3, s.c. 1 [Parma 7/2,1067].

167 See, e.g., ST I, q. 62, a. 2 [Leon. 5.111] (fire is naturally inclined to generate flesh if so moved by the nutritive soul). On the lower appetite’s obedience to reason, see, e.g., ST I, q. 83, a. 1, ad 5 [Leon. 5.308]: “istae inclinationes subiacent iudicio rationis, cui obedit inferior appetitus.”

168 See Erwin W. Straus, “The Upright Posture,” Psychiatric Quarterly 26 (1952): 559. “Conversation . . . demands distance in three directions: from the acoustical signs so that the phoneme can be perceived in its pure form; from things, so that they can be the object of common discourse; from the other person, so that speech can mediate between the speaker and listener. Upright posture produces such distances. It lifts us from the ground, puts us opposite to things, and confronts us with each other.” Ibid., 559.
certain relationship with celestial bodies. Because bodily nature, considered as a passive principle, is inclined to receive action from an extrinsic principle, the celestial motions affect human passions. Although these celestial influences are sometimes baleful and must be resisted by reason, they may also be salutary (e.g., by giving fertility).

5. Human Self-Preservation

As noted, every substance has a natural inclination to preserve itself in being according to its nature. But there is no such thing as “pure substance.” Each substance is specified by “its nature.” Man preserves himself in distinctively animal and rational ways through “those things through which the life of man are preserved, and contrary things impeded.”

As an animal, his inclination to self-preservation extends beyond the individual to the preservation of the species through the rearing and raising of young. As Kevin Flannery observes, man’s inclination to “survival” extends ultimately to his rational desire for eternal life. How that eternal life is secured must be further specified by the higher precepts of the natural and divine law. From the perspective of eternal life with God, the natural inclination of man to love God more than he loves his very self is a perfection, not a denial, of his inclination to self-preservation. Man does not merely preserve himself in the way

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169 ST I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 6.60] (natural inclination of a body to receive action from an extrinsic principle); SCG II, cap. 30, n. 15 [Leon. 13.339] (man as an inferior body has a natural inclination to obey higher bodies).
170 In II De sensu, lect. 1 n. 8 (celestial bodies can incline an animal to fertility or sterility).
171 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]; “ea per quae vita hominis conservatur et contrarium impeditur.”
172 ST I-II, q. 46, a. 5 [Leon. 6.295] (NI of generic nature to desire things to preserve life of both species and individual); ST II-II, q. 155, a. 2 [Leon. 10.254] (NI to things necessary for both the species, e.g., venereal acts); In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 3 [Parma 7/2.919] (NI to procreate proles, through which the specific nature is conserved); SCG III, cap. 136, n. 14 [Leon. 14.413] (NI to preserve species by generation); ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6, ad 3 [Leon. 7.158] (sensuality preserves nature in the species and individual).
174 See Quodlibet I, q. 4 a. 3 [Leon. 25/2.188-89:58-82]. On the natural inclination to love God more than oneself with reference to the notion of common good, see Thomas M. Osborne, Love of Self and Love of God in Thirteenth Century Ethics (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2005). Also, “the natural
that a tongue of fire consumes fuel or a Hobbesian savage resorts to any trick or cruelty to avoid violent death. Man preserves himself in a manner proper to the rational animal.

There is also a distinctively human order to the inclinations of man’s vegetative powers. Every living body has a natural inclination to the motion of growth. Growth of a living body is always of and towards something determinate. The spider does not grow into a goat. The fruit tree “expects”—i.e., has a natural inclination—to bear fruit, not potatoes or sausage. Every kind of animal has natural inclinations that are “specific” to that kind of animal. Man’s animality, likewise, is already shaped by his humanity. There is no “generic animal” lurking within man. Just as any animal produces its like, the union of male and

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inclinatio to self-preservation ... serves our freedom by giving us a love for being and living ... that makes possible the self-giving precept ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself.’” Levering, “Natural Law and Natural Inclinations,” 187. Thomas directly connects the Golden Rule as a natural law precept with self-love. ST I-II q. 99, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 7.199]: “amicabilia quae sunt ad altem, venerate ex amicabilia quae sunt homini ad seipsum, dum scilicet homo ita se habet ad altem sicut ad se. Et ideo in hoc quod dicitur, omnia quaecumque vultis ut faciant vobis homines, et vos facite illis, explicatur quaedam regula dilectionis proximi, quae etiam implicite continetur in hoc quod dicitur, diligas proximum tuum sicut teipsum.” Cf. De carit., a. 8, ad 7 [Marietti 775]: “ex natura, homo omnem hominem diligit, ut etiam philosophus dicit in VIII Ethic. Sed quod aliquis sit inimicus, est ex aliquo quod naturae superadditur, ex quo non debet tolli naturae inclinatio. Caritas ergo, dum ad dilectionem inimicorum movet, perficit naturalem inclinationem; secus autem est de illis quae habent contrarietatem ex sua natura, sicut ignis et aqua, lupus et ovis.” In other more mundane ways man’s inclination to self-preservation takes distinctive forms. See In IV Ethic., lect. 5, n. 2 [Leon. 47/2.215:23-25] (nature inclines to the love of wealth insofar as through those things man preserves human life); ST II-II, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 9.456] (natural inclination of the elderly to seek the aid of external things, which results in covetousness if excessive).

175 ST I-II, q. 41 a. 3 [Leon. 6.273].
176 The healing of a wound is a restoration to the body’s prior condition. In I De caelo, lect. 17, n. 8 [Leon. 3.69].
177 In Rom., cap. 8, lect. 4, n. 660 [Marietti 120].
178 My concern is not whether each biological species of animal is a truly distinct species in the philosophical sense. The point is that different animals incline to different things. E.g., In III De anima, lect. 5, n. 8 [Leon. 45/1.194:97-115] (NI of imperfect animals (e.g., ants and bees) to prudent works without apprehension); ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.158] (NI of dog to be furious is a certain natural law for the dog (but is against the natural law for the sheep and other meek animals)); De virt. comm., a. 8, ad 10 [Marietti 729] (NI of animals to particular virtues or vices, e.g., of the lion to virtue of boldness and vice of cruelty); In III Sent., d. 29, q. 1, a. 7 [Moos 3.941-42] (NI of storks to warm, nourish, and support their aged parents); De virt. comm., a. 6 [Marietti 722] (natural inclination of swallow (hirundo) to build its nest in the same way).
female results in the generation of other humans, not of goats or spiders.\textsuperscript{179} His offspring are “children” (\textit{liberi}) and he has a natural inclination to educate them in a human way.\textsuperscript{180} Like that of the turtledove (\textit{turtura}), his animality inclines more to monogamy than to polygamy because the human child needs parental care for a long time, which can be better provided by one man and one woman.\textsuperscript{181}

6. Human Sensitive Powers

Man’s sensitive powers are also shaped by his humanity. Although temperance is, in a way, contrary to “bestial nature,” this virtue is nevertheless “about the natural concupiscences of food, drink and sexual matters, which are indeed ordained to the natural common good.”\textsuperscript{182} This “natural common good” is distinctive to man. Although an omnivore, man cannot live on grass alone like a cow. Generation is the proper end of the genital members and all acts outside of \textit{commixtio maris et feminae} are contrary to the

\textsuperscript{179} The same applies to fire. See \textit{ST} I, q. 80, a. 1 [Leon. 5.282] (NI of fire to generate something similar to itself); \textit{ST} I, q. 60, a. 4 (NI of fire to communicate its form to another); \textit{ST} I, q. 62, a. 2 [Leon. 5.111] (fire generates fire).

\textsuperscript{180} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]. Cf. \textit{In V Ethic.}, lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:66-68] (inclination of the nature common to man and other animals, e.g., to union of male and female, education of offspring (\textit{natus}), and other things of this kind).

\textsuperscript{181} See \textit{In IV Sent.}, d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968]: “Pluralitas ergo uxorum quamvis non sit contra jus naturale tertio modo acceptum, est tamen contra jus naturale secundo modo acceptum, quia jure divino prohibitur; et etiam contra jus naturale primo modo acceptum, ut ex dictis patet, quod natura dictat animali cuilibet secundum modum convenientem suae speciei; unde etiam quaedam animalia, in quibus ad educationem proles reuiritur sollicitudino utriusque, scilicet maris et feminae, naturali instinctu servant conjunctionem unius ad unum, sicut patet in turture et columba, et hujusmodi.” Cf. \textit{In IV Sent.}, d. 40, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3 [Parma 7/2.1033]: “hanc conjunctionem diversa animalia diversimode docuit secundum diversas eorum conditiones.” Cf. \textit{In IV Sent.}, d. 26, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1 [Parma 7/2.918]: “filiorum procreatio communis est omnibus animalibus. Tamen ad hoc non inclinat eodem modo in omnibus animalibus, quia quaedam animalia sunt quorum filii statim nati possunt sibi sufficienter victum quaerere, vel ad quorum sustentationem alter sufficient: et in his non est aliqua determinatio masculi ad feminam. In illis autem quorum filii indigent urtiusque sustentatione, sed ad parvum tempus, inveniatur aliqua determinatio quantum ad tempus illud; sicut in avibus quibusdam patet. Sed in homine, quia indiget filius cura parentum usque ad magnum tempus, est maxima determinatio masculi ad feminam, ad quam etiam natura generis inclinat.”

\textsuperscript{182} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 3, ad 1 [Leon. 7.171]: “temperantia est circa concupiscentias naturales cibi et potus et venereorum, quae quidem ordinatur ad bonum commune naturae, sicut et alia legalia ordinatur ad bonum commune morale.”
generation of children and all acts outside of marriage are contrary to the “due education of children.”

Man’s entire physiognomy is ordered to speech, knowledge, and social life.

7. Humanly Rational Rationality

The order of the natural inclinations considered at the level of reason is especially rich and variegated. It must be understood that this order exists by nature, not by human construction. As Levering notes, “[t]his fundamental ordering is received, not constituted, by the creature . . .”

But the breadth of St. Thomas’s nature-lexicon gives rise to misunderstandings on this point. He considers the question of whether it is lawful for one who has been condemned to defend himself by violence if he be able to do so. This objection is raised:

[I]t is always lawful to do that to which nature inclines us, as being of natural right, so to speak. Now, to resist corruption is an inclination of nature not only in men and animals but also in things devoid of sense. Therefore if he can do so, the accused, after condemnation, may lawfully resist being put to death.

St. Thomas’s reply suggests the familiar opposition between nature and rational order:

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183 *De malo*, q. 15, a. 1 [Leon. 23.270:137]; “prolis . . . debitae eius educationi”; *De malo*, q. 15, a. 1, ad 7 [Leon. 23.241-58]: “[actus luxuriae contra naturam] [u]no modo absolute, quia scilicet est contra naturam omnis animalis; et sic omnis actus luxuriae praeter commixtionem maris et feminae dicitur esse contra naturam, in quantum non est proportionatus generationi, quae in quolibet genere animalis fit ex commixtione utriusque sexus . . . Alio modo dicitur esse aliquid contra naturam, quia est contra naturam propriam hominis, cuius est ordinare generationis actum ad debitam educationem; et sic omnis fornicatio est contra naturam.”

184 See, e.g., *In I De caelo*, lect. 2, n. 6 [Leon. 3.7]) (NI to speech); *ST* q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170] (NI to live in society). In general, his animal powers are ordered to whatever is fitting for man. *ST* I, q. 80, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.282] (natural inclination of each power of animal soul to what is convenient to itself).

185 Levering, “Natural Law and Natural Inclinations,” 184.

186 *ST* II-II, q. 69, a. 4, arg. 1 [Leon. 9.113]: “Illud enim ad quod natura inclinat semper est licitum, quasi de iure naturali existens. Sed naturae inclinatio est ad resistendum corruptibentibus, non solum in hominibus et animalibus, sed etiam in insensibilius rebus. Ergo licet reo condemnato resistere, si potest, ne tradatur in mortem.”
Reason was given to man that those things to which nature inclines be pursued, not indiscriminately [passim], but in accordance with the order of reason. Hence, not all self-defense is lawful, but only such as is accomplished with due moderation.\(^{187}\)

But what constitutes “due moderation”? Such moderation in this case consists of doing the just thing. It would be unjust for the condemned man to resist the ruling of a lawful authority. Contrary to the inclination of man’s generically animal nature considered in abstraction from his humanity, his natural reason gives him the capacity to apprehend, not construct, the just course and to choose accordingly. The just course of action in this case flows from the common good of the social order, which is a rational good.

As noted, man’s natural inclination as a rational creature is, in part, “to live in society,” which requires him “to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things.”\(^{188}\) Man has a “natural” (proper sense) inclination to will both the civil and “natural” (improper sense) goods of man.\(^{189}\) In particular, with regard to the civil good, St. Thomas speaks of natural inclinations to comply with the *ius gentium*, e.g., to keep agreements, keep enemy legates safe, etc.\(^{190}\) The natural inclination of man is carried out in different, but not conflicting, ways by different individual persons. There is, for example, a natural inclination of the “common human nature” to various “offices and acts” such as agriculture, married life, and contemplative life.\(^{191}\)

\(^{187}\) *ST* II-II, q. 69, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 9.113]: “homini data est ratio, ut ea ad quae natura inclinat non passim, sed secundum rationis ordinem exequatur. Et ideo non quaelibet defensio sui est licita, sed quae fit cum debito moderamine.” In Benziger, *passim* is blandly rendered “in all cases.” Lewis and Short’s definitions “without order, indiscriminately, promiscuously,” “heedlessly,” “hither and thither, in every direction” are a better fit. *Passim* derives from, *passus* (“spread out,” participle of *pandere*,”to spread”) + -im (adverb-forming suffix). *OED*, s.v. “passim.”

\(^{188}\) *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170].

\(^{189}\) *In III Sent.*, d. 33, q. 2, a. 4, qc. 3 [Moos 3.1065] (“naturale”). This formulation is confusing on its face, but familiarity with Thomas’s nature-lexicon makes the meaning clear in context.

\(^{190}\) *In V Ethic.*, lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:71-73].

\(^{191}\) *In IV Sent.*, d. 26, q. 1, a. 2, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.919]. In general, there is a natural inclination to what is necessary for the perfection of one (which natural perfections are common to all) distinct from NI to what is
As in the case of the condemned man who ought not resist his execution, the rational inclinations are often at odds with the default inclinations of lower nature taken in abstraction from the whole man. St. Thomas speaks of natural inclinations of the good citizen to face the danger of death for the common good, to suffer damage to his own property and person for sake of the common good, and to repress those who rise up against him.\textsuperscript{192} In general, a man is naturally inclined to love his life “in due measure” (not to love or preserve animal life at all costs).\textsuperscript{193}

But even as the seeming opposition between reason and “nature” (secondary sense) can be exaggerated, so man’s rational nature should not be construed as a sort of “frontier fort” of civilization in a wilderness of lower nature’s unruly inclinations. Because human nature is a substantial unity, man’s natural rational inclination is to the good of the whole man. Will, as rational appetite, is naturally inclined not only to happiness in general but also to whatever is included in the happiness of a rational animal—which includes not only knowing the truth but also being and living.\textsuperscript{194} Indeed, man’s threefold natural inclination is a recapitulation of the Dionysian triad—esse, vivere, cognoscere.\textsuperscript{195} The rational pursuit of man’s whole good sometimes requires that man not pursue certain objects of reason. Even

\textsuperscript{192} Quodlibet I, q. 4, a. 3 co. and ad 3 (the part risks injury for the protect the whole, as one interposes the hand to protect the head from a sword thrust) [Leon 25/2.188:66-71]; ST I, q. 60, a. 5 [Leon. 5.104] (natural inclination of the virtuous citizen to expose himself to mortal danger for the preservation of the whole republic); ST II-II, q. 26, a. 3 [Leon. 8.211-12] (property and person); ST I-II, q. 87, a. 1 [Leon. 7.121] (repress opponents).

\textsuperscript{193} ST II-II, q. 126, a. 1 [Leon. 10.47].

\textsuperscript{194} De ver., q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.624:196-203].

\textsuperscript{195} See ST I-II, q. 85, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 7.110]: “Dionysius loquitur de bono primo naturae, quod est esse, vivere et intelligere; ut patet eius verba intuenti.” See also discussion of Pseudo-Dionysius in Chapter II.
the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake has a certain order. The virtue of “studiousness” requires that man “exercise a laudible restraint on the immoderate seeking of knowledge.”

It should also be noted that the natural inclinations of lower nature are not purely “selfish.” Even “natural thing” (at the lowest levels) not only has a natural inclination to its own good but also to “spread abroad its good amongst others.” Also, as noted, the part seeks the good of the whole. Thus, although sinful inclinations (fomes) war against the unity of man’s nature, there is a certain reciprocity among all levels of his nature.

The rational order of man’s natural inclinations comes to light more clearly in relation to St. Thomas’s understanding of virtue. On one hand, the virtues allow man to follow his natural inclinations (considered severally) in due manner; to every determinate natural inclination corresponds a special virtue or power, e.g., vengeance corresponds to the inclination of nature to remove harm (through irascible power). On the other hand man has a natural inclination (in the full and proper sense) to virtue in general and to each of the virtues in particular (see Chapter IV). Indeed, “the inclination of the nature of man insofar as he is man never contradicts the inclination of virtue, but is in conformity with it.”

Man’s natural inclination as rational is not ordered to a sort of virtuous self-sufficiency or to a merely human, political community. Instead, for St. Thomas, man’s ultimate end is God, who is the common good of all. Man has a natural inclination not only

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196 ST II-II, q. 166, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.344].
197 ST I, q. 19, a. 2 [Leon. 4.233].
198 ST II-II, q. 108, a. 2 [Leon. 9.411-12].
199 In III Sent., d. 29, q. 1, a. 3 [Moos 3.929].
200 ST II-II, q. 26, a. 3 [Leon. 8.211-12]: “ex caritate magis debet homo diligere Deum, qui est bonum commune omnium, quam seipsum, quia beatitudo est in Deo sicut in communi et fontali omnium principio . . . .”
to know the truth about God in a disinterested way, but also to love God more than his very self and to be subject to God as his superior. To love oneself more than God is a “perverse love” because it is contrary to man’s true natural inclination. As it is rational for him to expose himself to mortal danger for the good of the republic, so all the more so is it to subject himself to martyrdom for God or to lay down his life for his neighbor, or to give up his possessions and follow the Lord.

The natural inclination to offer sacrifice to God shows that man, by nature, is dependent on, and stands in a hierarchy below, God. Offering sacrifice is the “mode” of subjection to a higher thing that is distinctive of human nature: “just as in natural things the lower are naturally subject to the higher, so too it is a dictate of natural reason in accordance with man’s natural inclination that he should tender submission (subiectio) and honor, according to his mode, to that which is above man.” Natural reason prompts man to seek God’s help. Using signs, man shows his subjection and honor in recognition of God’s lordship (dominium). The natural inclination to honor and submit to God is not a bodily or “psychological” urge that must be ordered by reason “from the outside.” Rather, this inclination, as natural, flows from an order already given in the nature of the rational creature: “Natural reason tells man that he is subject (subditus) to a higher being, on account

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201 Quodlibet I, q. 4, a. 3 [Leon. 25/2.188:50-57]: “Dilectio . . . naturalis est quaedam naturalis inclinatio indita naturae a Deo. . . . Impossibile est . . . quod aliqua naturalis inclinatio vel dilectio sit perversa: perversa autem dilectio est ut aliquis dilectione amicitiae diligat plus se quam Deum. Non potest ergo talis dilectio esse naturalis.”

202 Lower things are subject to higher things. See, e.g., De ver., q. 22, a. 13 [Leon. 22/3.645:143-72]; In II De sensu, lect. 1, n. 8.

203 ST II-II, q. 85, a. 1 [Leon. 9.215]. Sacrifice is offered only to God. SCG III, cap. 120, n. 9 [Leon. 14.372-74]. See generally my article, “Aquinas on the Natural Inclination of Man to Offer Sacrifice to God,” Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association 86 (forthcoming).
of the imperfections (defectus) which he perceives in himself, and in which he needs help and direction from someone above him . . .”

St. Thomas’s discussion of sacrifice in the Summa theologiae is part of a set of questions on religion as a species of the cardinal virtue of justice. Man’s reason is naturally inclined to justice. Justice pertains to “giving another his due” and religion is that species of justice “whereby we pay our debt to God.” Thus man’s natural inclination to render submission and honor is his inclination to make a just payment of what is due to God. Offering visible sacrifices is man’s special mode of paying this debt. Various other “religious” inclinations of man’s nature further illustrate his outward ordination of his nature: the natural inclinations of man to confess his sins (in the proper way, as he ought, what he ought, and when he ought) and to keep the sabbath.

In the fallen world, the very fact of disorder between inclinations of reason and those of lower nature shows that there is a given order or nature (proper sense) against which reason can judge that there is a disorder amongst the lower appetites (concretely) that must be rectified. In other words, reason knows, and seeks to correct, the disorder of nature because it apprehends or infers what ordered nature really is. Reason “resists the natural

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204 ST II-II, q. 85, a. 1 [Leon. 9.215-16]: “naturalis ratio dictat homini quod alicui superiori subjiciatur, proprie defectus quos in seipso sentit, in quibus ab aliquo superiori eget adiuvatur et dirigi.” Defectus means the natural tendencies of the human body considered as a body. “[D]eth and other defects of nature” are intrinsic propensities of material things to corruption, not necessarily wounds of original sin. ST I-II, q. 42, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 6.277]. Defects are “natural” only in the sense of the natural inclination of matter; they are contrary to the natural inclination of man’s form. ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116]. It is also natural (in the properly human sense) for man to use reason and artifice to supply the deficiencies of his own bodily nature. E.g., clothing supplements the “defect” of having bare skin. In I Cor. [rep. Reg.], cap. 11, vs. 5.

205 ST II-II, q. 183, a. 4 [Leon. 10.449]: “homo secundum naturalem rationem ad iustitiam inclinatur.”

206 ST I-II, q. 60, a. 3 [Leon. 6.389].

207 This is not to discount Thomas’s teaching that there are also interior sacrifices and other inward acts of religious.

208 In IV Sent., d. 17, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, ad 1 [Moos 4.897] (confession); ST II-II, q. 122, a. 4. ad 1 [Leon. 9.478] (keeping the sabbath is a specification of the natural inclination to set aside time for necessary things, including sleep and spiritual refreshment).
inclinations of the body” because nature, properly speaking, requires those inclinations to rest in the order of the whole nature. Indeed, prior to their disordered condition, the bodily inclinations are “subject to reason.”

Conclusion

The inclinations of nature described in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 are best understood as an *inclinatio hominis* because the nature in question is that of a single composite rational-animal-substance. As Robert Henle comments,

> This listing of human inclinations and human goods bears witness . . . to St. Thomas’s view that human nature is basically good. One might, however, misinterpret this presentation as justifying a gratification of all human desires. All human inclinations are good in themselves but they must be regulated by the primary inclination, proper to man, to order all his acts according to reason, and this means according to the virtues which, in turn, enable a man to use all human goods correctly. Thus, to every inclination of man there corresponds some virtue.

The order of the natural inclinations, as an order among the virtues, is not the construction of a disembodied reason set apart from nature; it is instead the flowering and perfection of nature as governed by natural reason within the whole man.

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210 ST I, q. 83, a. 1, ad 5 [Leon. 5.308].

CHAPTER IV

NATURALIS: THE HUMANLY NATURAL

The greatest pass with the muleta, the most dangerous to make . . . is the natural.
In this the man faces the bull with the muleta held in his left hand, the sword in his right.
—Ernest Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon

Why add a separate chapter on “natural” as distinct from “nature”? In the last chapter, we looked at man in terms of his substantial form. He is not merely a body or an animal; nor is he somehow a dis-embodied intellect who masters an animal nature like a jockey on a horse or, still less, like a bullfighter who must subdue a raging beast as best he can. In this chapter, by contrast, we look not at nature, but at the things that are natural to, or for, human nature. Naturalis is an analogous term in Latin, as “natural” is in English. It can mean the natural thing itself or, by extension, the things that are befitting to the natural thing. Thus, to understand what St. Thomas means by natural inclination, it is not enough to consider what he means by “human nature.” We must also consider those things towards which his nature inclines: the “proper completions” of his nature, to use Russell Hittinger’s term.¹ St. Thomas says that “natural” means “that which is in accord with [secundum] nature.”² But what things are “in accord with nature”? In the case of human nature, the matter is not so simple.

In the contemporary literature on St. Thomas’s natural law doctrine, it is common to take “natural” in the sense of the purely innate or spontaneous biological or psychological urges, as opposed to reason and characteristically human things. But St. Thomas uses the

¹ Russell Hittinger, Critique of the New Natural Law Theory, 37.
² ST I-II, q. 31, a. 7 [Leon. 6.221-22], citing Phys. II, 1: “naturale dicitur quod est secundum naturam.” In general, of course, one can say that “natural” (naturalis), as the adjectival form of “nature,” simply means “of or pertaining to nature.” See, e.g., Lewis and Short, s.v., “naturalis, e. adj.” (def. III): “of or concerning nature.”
term *naturalis* in a broad range of senses that defies the modern stereotypes. As indicated in Appendix A (“Index of Natural Inclinations”), he describes as *naturalis* man’s inclinations to a bewildering variety of things, including many distinctively rational inclinations. Although neither virtue, nor schooling, nor political life, nor specific religious practices are themselves spontaneous, effortless outgrowths of nature, St. Thomas makes clear that man has natural inclinations to virtue, to education, to life in society, to learn the truth about God, to offer sacrifice to God, and to confess one’s sins. A human life of action in accordance with reason brings the inclinations of nature to his proper ends. Man “is by nature a ‘conventional animal,’” in James Murphy’s paradoxical formulation. Even the natural law, in a sense, changes “by addition” to the extent that certain things—e.g., private property and servitude—that are not directly supplied by nature provide things “useful for human life.” This chapter explores how St. Thomas can call all of these things, in a certain way, *naturalis*—a term that means something very different from the prevalent senses of the modern term “natural.”

The chapter proceeds in four parts. Part A examines certain misleading senses of “natural” in modern English. Part B examines certain seemingly proto-modern senses of

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3 Schütz lists ten definitions for *naturalis*, *naturale*. Some, but not all, of these definitions correspond directly to Schütz’s nine definitions of *natura*. He also lists more than one hundred terms that appear in combination with naturalis (from *accidens naturalis* to *vox naturalis*).

4 *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170] (virtue); *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170] (education of children, life in society, truth about God); *ST* II-II, q. 85, a. 1 [Leon. 9.215-16] (sacrifice); and *In IV Sent.*, d. 17, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, ad 1 [Moos 4.897] (confession).

5 *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 4 [Leon. 7.171]: “ad legem naturae pertinent ea ad quae homo naturaliter inclinatur; inter quae homini proprium est ut inclinetur ad agendum secundum rationem.”


7 *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 5 and ad 3 [Leon. 7.172-3] (private property and servitude are additions to the natural law “ad utilitatem humanae vitae”).
natural in St. Thomas’s usage of the term *naturalis* and distinguishes those senses from *naturalis* in the sense proper to natural law. Part C investigates the “humanly natural”—i.e., what is natural for man as a rational being, which is not identifiable with things that flow automatically from the “principles of nature,” but instead means those things to which nature inclines but which must be mediated, perfected, or carried out through acts of apprehension, reasoning, and will. The last part, D, examines a central case of the humanly natural and its accompanying inclination: man’s natural inclination to virtue.

A. Dangerous Senses of “Natural” in English

Although the multiplicity of senses of *naturalis* in St. Thomas’s lexicon presents difficulties, the chief danger lies with translating *naturalis* as “natural,” understood in certain predominant modern senses of that word. As we saw with the case of the noun “nature,” here again we see a dyad of dangerous senses: physicalist and primitivist.

1. Physicalist Senses of “Natural”

In the physical-material vein, the *OED* gives a circular definition of “natural” as “Dealing with, concerned with, or relating to the natural world” where, of course, the “natural world” is understood to mean the physical world as opposed to the world of human artifice and meddling. Likewise, the *American Heritage Dictionary* defines “natural,” as follows: “pertains to the natural world (e.g., ‘natural science’).” With regard to the human animal, “natural” refers chiefly to biological functions and structures. Thus, the *OED* defines “natural” (as it pertains to man) as follows: “Of a function, characteristic, disease, etc., of the human body: occurring or appearing spontaneously or in the course of nature.”
Consistent with these physicalistic senses of “natural,” modern philosophical “naturalism” understands all of reality to be reducible to physical bodies and processes. According to this naturalistic reductionism, as Robert Spaemann explains, nature cannot be “a standard for distinguishing anything,” since “everything is nature and so nothing is unnatural. . . . Everything which happens is the result of the natural forces which bring it all about. . . . The unnatural means the same thing as the impossible.”8 In the physicalist view, there is no room for a natural moral laws or standards. If “everything is nature,” and everything that happens is natural, then “[w]hat one imagines to exist beyond nature, primarily . . . any thought of freedom and self-determination, is an illusion which itself is subject to a naturalistic explanation.”9

If “nature” means “everything that happens” according to the physical “laws” or processes of the entire material world, then “natural” takes on a meaning that is both broader and narrower than what St. Thomas means by naturalis in the context of inclinatio naturalis (proper sense) and lex naturalis. The scope of the natural is too broad because, in effect, everything is natural. The notion of a thing being “unnatural” or “against nature” is unintelligible, especially if human things are reduced to physiological processes. Sin, error, monstrosity, failure, vice, and the like are all simply natural without further distinction. On the other hand, natural in the modern sense is too narrow. The so-called “minimum content natural law” of H. L. A. Hart and others (following Hobbes’s flattening of human teleology)

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8 Robert Spaemann, “Normality and Naturalness,” trans. Jeremiah Alberg, in Happiness and Benevolence (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 161. “The storm which breaks the tree is as natural as the growth of the tree. Deviations from statistical normality are as natural as the normality itself.” Ibid.
9 Ibid. “Voltaire lets nature exclaim: Je suis le grand tout. (I am the great all.).” Ibid.
leaves little or no room for the proper perfections of human life, such as virtue, political
life, and religion.10

2. Primitivist Senses of “Natural”

Primitivist definitions of natural are equally prominent in English. The OED,
consistent with Mill’s second sense of nature, defines “natural” as “[f]ormed by nature; not subject to human intervention, not artificial.” Likewise, in the American Heritage
Dictionary’s definition, “natural” is what is “present in or produced by nature,” “in accordance with the natural course,” or simply “in a primitive state”—where “nature,” in turn, is defined as “a primitive state of existence, untouched and uninfluenced by artificiality.”11 With regard to man, the primitivist sense of “natural,” in the American Heritage Dictionary’s definition is “[e]xisting or present by nature; inherent in the very constitution of a person or thing; innate; not acquired or assumed.” This unacquired naturalness does not consist merely of nakedness and, say, having opposable thumbs, but extends to the affective realm. What is natural to a person (or thing) is a “quality, attribute, emotion, etc.: that belongs intrinsically to a person or thing; that comes easily or spontaneously to a person.” The definition of “natural” in Black’s Law Dictionary

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10 See H. L. A. Hart, The Concept of Law (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 189-95. “What Hobbes attempted to do was to maintain the idea of natural law, but to divorce it from the idea of man’s perfection; only if the natural law can be deduced from how men actually live, from the most powerful force that actually determines all men, or most men most of the time, can it be effectual or of practical value.” Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History, 180.

11 A curious hybrid of physicalist and primitivist senses of natural in modern usage is the expression “natural death,” which means either (1) biological death as such, i.e., the death of an organism by whatever cause (physicalist sense); or (2) death by “natural” causes (disease, old age) as opposed to violent or accidental death (primitivist sense). Reflecting both senses, the American Heritage Dictionary notes, “natural death” is death by intrinsic, material causes, not violence or accident.
exemplifies the primitivist sense: “Untouched by man or by influences of civilization; wild; untutored, and is the opposite of the word ‘artificial.’”

The primitivist sense of the humanly natural is non-teleological. As Henry Veatch explains: “in his natural condition man is no longer to be thought of as having any natural end or perfection at all; instead, he is but a creature of needs, appetites, and desires.” In this Hobbesian condition, man’s chief appetite is “the desire to avoid death.”

As explained in Chapter III, for St. Thomas, nature is not an ideal primitive state. Still less is it a state of misery to be overcome by pure convention in opposition to nature. Accordingly, the natural is not the same as the spontaneous or the untutored. In St. Thomas’s sense of naturalis, the condition of the feral child, the man “who is either a beast or a god” (in Aristotle’s sense of one who does not need the polis), or the unencumbered individual of modern liberalism is decidedly unnatural (innaturale).

B. Naturalis in St. Thomas’s Latin

St. Thomas gives differing accounts of what the term naturalis means. For example, he often says that “natural” can be said “in two ways” (dupliciter)—in at least seventeen distinct pairs of different ways. Not all of these senses of nature and natural are relevant to

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15 The various “two ways” in which naturalis is said include the following: from principles of nature vs. that towards which nature inclines (In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.918]); out of a sufficient principle from which something necessarily follows vs. by natural inclination, but without a sufficient principle within (De ver., q. 24, a. 10, ad 1 [Leon. 22/3.708:333-59]); according to generic and specific nature (In Rom., cap. 1, lect. 8, n. 149 [Marietti, 28]; ST I-II, q. 31, a. 7 [Leon. 6.221-22]); according to specific and individual nature (De ver., q. 25, a. 6, ad 4 [Leon. 22/3.742:139-42]; ST I-II, q. 51, a. 1 [Leon. 6.325-26]; ST I-II, q. 63, a. 1 [Leon. 6.406]); according to form and matter (De malo, q. 5, a. 5 [Leon. 23.141:164-66]; ST I-II, q. 10, a. 1, ad 2); according to matter but congruent with form vs. according to matter but not congruent with form (De malo,
the *inclinationes naturales* referenced in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2. I shall examine a few of these senses that are particularly relevant to natural law.

**1. Problem Senses**

Some of the meanings of naturalis in St. Thomas’s lexicon are problematic in that they seem to anticipate certain modern understandings of “natural” that are at odds with the sense of naturalis proper to St. Thomas’s natural law teaching. First, he uses naturalis in several senses that seem to correspond to the modern materialist-physicalist senses. For example, he divides the natural from the rational in several contexts. With respect to man in particular, “natural” in one text refers to the nature man has in common with irrational creatures, which is “divided against reason” (*condividitur rationi*). He also uses naturalis to describe certain evils that are unnatural with respect to the particular nature. That is, in terms of universal nature, any effect that falls with the entire order of causality in the universe is

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q. 5, a. 5 [Leon. 23.141:174-80]); according to mutable nature vs. immutable nature (*ST* II-II, q. 57, a. 2, ad 1 [Leon. 9.4]); according to universal nature vs. according to particular nature (*De ver.*, q. 13, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 22/2.417-18:193-215]); that which has the nature vs. that which is consequent upon the nature (*De malo*, q. 5, a. 5 [Leon. 23.141:159-61]); from nature as an active principle vs. nature as a passive principle (*ST* I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 6.60]; *De ver.*, q. 12, a. 3 [Leon. 22/2.375:200-10]); entirely from nature vs. partly from nature and partly from an exterior principle (*ST* I-II, q. 51, a. 1 [Leon. 6.325-26]); natural habit as disposition entirely from nature vs. disposition partly from nature, partly from extrinsic principle (*ST* I-II, q. 51, a. 1 [Leon. 6.325-26]); produces an effect like that of nature vs. performs actions instrumentally through the active and passive qualities which are the principle so natural actions (*ST* I, q. 78, a. 2, ad 1 [Leon. 5.252]); that which of itself is in a thing vs. that which is reduced to something which belongs of itself to that thing as to its principle (*ST* I-II, q. 10, a. 1 [Leon. 6.83]); caused by nature *ex parte objecti* vs. *ex parte subiecti* (*ST* I-II, q. 46, a. 5 [Leon. 6.295]); from essential principles vs. present at birth (*ST* III, q. 2, a. 12 [Leon. 11.51]).

16 E.g., Thomas sometimes uses the term naturalis (adj.) (also scientia naturalis) as a synonym for *physica*, pertaining to physics or to Aristotle’s physical works in particular. E.g., *ST* I, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 4.7]: “Eandem … conclusionem demonstrat astrologus et naturalis, puta quod terra est rotunda, sed astrologus per medium mathematicum, idest a materia abstractum; naturalis autem per medium circa materiam consideratum.”

17 See, e.g., *De virt. comm.*, a. 8 (“Dividitur autem principium operativum quod est ratio, contra principium operativum quod est natura, ut patet in II Phys. [cap. 8, 199a10]; eo quo rationalis potestas est ad opposita, natura autem ordinatur ad unum. Unde manifestum est quod perfectio virtutis non est a natura, sed a ratione”; *In II Sent.*, d. 2, q. 2, a. 2, ad 4 (“naturale potest … sumi uno modo, prout dividitur contra ens in anima, et sic dicitur naturale omne illud, quod habet esse fixum in natura”).

18 *ST* I-II, q. 31, a. 7 [Leon. 6.221-22].
natural. For example, he speaks of “natural death” which all men die.\textsuperscript{19} Also, “[w]hatever God does” in “nature” is in some way natural.\textsuperscript{20}

Anticipating primitivist modern senses, St. Thomas says \textit{naturalis} can mean what a man has had from birth; natural death is distinct from violent death; nudity is “of the natural law, because nature does not give man clothing, which art must discover;” and the community of possessions and the original liberty of all men are natural, despite the later invention of private property and servitude.\textsuperscript{21}

2. \textit{Proper Sense: “according to nature”}

To get at the proper sense of “natural” with respect to human nature and natural law, it is helpful to draw two distinctions. The first distinction is between \textit{naturalis} as meaning either that which has a nature or that which follows upon a nature. For St. Thomas, \textit{naturalis} can simply mean “that which has a nature”—i.e., “the natural [thing].”\textsuperscript{22} Stones, sand, figs, chimpanzees, and lightning are natural (things). The human body and the several human powers are natural in the same way. But he distinguishes the naturalness of the thing itself

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 7.172-3]: “naturali morte moriuntur omnes communiter, tam nocentes quam innocentes. Quae quidem naturalis mors divina potestate inducitur propter peccatum originale ….” \textit{ST} I-II, q. 44, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 6.283-84]: “pericula mortis non solum contrariantur appetitu animali, sed etiam contrariantur naturae. Et propter hoc, in huismodi timore non solum fit contractio ex parte appetitus, sed etiam ex parte naturae corporalis, sic enim disponitur animal ex imaginatione mortis contrahens calorem ad interiora, sicut quando naturaliter mors imminet.”

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 7.172-3]: “[I]n rebus naturalibus quidquid a Deo fit, est quodammodo naturale.”

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{ST} III, q. 2, a. 12 [Leon. 11.51] (“dicitur esse homini naturale quod ab ipsa nativitate habet”); \textit{ST} I-II, q. 42, a. 2 [Leon. 6.277] (“malum naturae quandoque est a causa naturali, et tunc dicitur malum naturae, non solum quia privat naturae bonum, sed etiam quia est effectus naturae; sicut mors naturalis, et alii huismodi defectus. Aliquando vero malum naturae provenit ex causa non naturali, sicut mors quae violenter infertur a persecutore.”); \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 7.173] (“possemus dicere quod hominem esse nudum est de iure naturali, quia natura non dedit ei vestitum, sed ars adinvenit. Et hoc modo communis omnium possessio, et omnium una libertas, dicitur esse de iure naturali ….”).

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{De malo}, q. 5, a. 5 [Leon. 23.141-158-63]: “naturale dicitur dupliciter: vel id quod habet naturam, sicut dicimus corpora naturalia; vel illud quod consequitur naturam secundum naturam existens, sicut dicimus quod ferri sursum, est naturale igni: et sic loquimur nunc de naturali, quod est secundum naturam.”
from a broader sense of natural as “that which follows on nature as being according to the
nature.” The various actions and operations that follow upon a given nature are natural to
that nature. A stone’s falling downward is natural, as is lightning’s striking and the
chimpanzee’s eating bananas. Likewise, in the case of man, his risibility is a natural power
and his laughing is natural in the broader sense that it naturally follows upon his risibility.

The second distinction is between the materially natural and the formally natural. The
distinction between natural thing and natural consequence only goes so far for purposes of
explaining the naturalness of natural inclination in the context of natural law. For example,
death is natural for man in the sense that the corruption and death of the body follow upon the
material nature of corporeality. At the same time, death is an evil to be avoided and,
therefore, killing is against the natural law. Is this a contradiction? It is not. St. Thomas
explains that the term “natural” refers to that which is “caused by nature.” As explained in
Chapter III, however, “nature” can mean matter or form and, correspondingly, universal or
particular causality. Correspondingly, something can be natural to (or for) a thing with
respect to either the thing’s specific nature (form) or its individual nature (matter).
But when the nature in question is a particular kind of thing, the proper sense of naturalis is that
which is befitting to the form of that particular nature. Form is “more natural” than matter:

Hence since ‘nature’ may refer to two things, namely, the form and the matter, something is
called natural in two ways, either according to the form or according to the matter. According
to the form, it is natural to fire to give off heat, for action follows upon the form; and
according to the matter, as it is natural to water that it can be heated by fire. And since the

\[23\] Ibid.
\[24\] ST I-II, q. 46, a. 5 [Leon. 6.295]: “naturale dicitur illud quod causatur a natura, ut patet in II Physic.
Unde utrum aliquus passio sit magis vel minus naturalis, considerari non potest nisi ex causa sua.”
\[25\] See ST I-II, q. 63, a. 1 [Leon. 6.406]; ST I-II, q. 10, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 6.84].
\[26\] See De ver., q. 25, a. 6 [Leon. 22/3.742:140-42], ad 4; ST I-II, q. 51, a. 1 [Leon. 6.325-26]. On
natura individualis, see Chapter III.
form is more properly nature than the matter, what is natural according to the form is more natural than what is natural according to the matter.\textsuperscript{27}

With respect to form, it is natural to the rabbit to eat greens and hop about, not to be torn to pieces by the hawk. It is natural to the hawk, in turn, to eat rabbits, not to be shredded by an airplane propeller mid-flight.\textsuperscript{28} At the level of universal nature, the death of the prey in the jaws of another is just as natural as the survival of the predator. Universal nature, as discussed in Chapter II, encompasses the whole order of natural causes. In this larger order (which goes beyond the particular nature of each kind of thing), everything that happens is in some way natural. In the simplest example, tidal motion is not natural to water according to its form as a heavy body (by which it is inclined downward) but is natural to it according to its subordination to the moon. St. Thomas distinguishes between these two senses of naturalis as follows:

\begin{quotation}
[We] call that natural which is caused by an agent to which the patient is naturally subject, even if it is not in keeping with the specific nature of the patient; for just as the ebb and flow of the sea is natural, because it is produced by the motion of the moon, to which the water is naturally subject, although it is not natural to the nature of water.\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quotation}

In the case of the human body, its corporeality is good for sense perception (making knowledge possible) but it has the tendency to corrupt in the way of all flesh.\textsuperscript{30} Death is

\textsuperscript{27} De malo, q. 5, a. 5 [Leon. 23.141:164-73]: “Unde cum natura dicatur dupliciter, scilicet forma et materia, dupliciter dicitur aliquid naturale: vel secundum formam, vel secundum materiam. Secundum formam quidem, sicut naturale est igni quod calefaciat, nam actio consequitur formam; secundum materiam autem, sicut aquae est naturale quod ab igne calefieri possit. Cumque forma sit magis natura quam materia, naturalius est quod est naturale secundum formam quam quod est naturale secundum materiam.”

\textsuperscript{28} Airplanes are not natural, but it is natural to man to use his hands and reason to make useful artifacts. For man’s purposes, though, it is not useful for the artifacts upon which he relies to be destroyed, e.g., by crashing or rusting. Thus Thomas notes that iron is the right material for cutting because of its natural hardness, but is imperfect in that it naturally rusts. \textit{ST} I-II, q. 85 a. 6 [Leon. 7.116].

\textsuperscript{29} In Rom., cap. 11, lect. 3, n. 910 [Marietti, 169]: “Dicimus enim esse naturale, quod fit ab agente, cui naturaliter subditur patiens, quamvis etiam non sit secundum propriam naturam patientis; sicut enim fluxus et refluxus maris est naturalis, propter hoc quod causatur ex motu lunae, cui naturaliter subditur aqua, quamvis non sit naturalis secundum formam aquae.”

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116].
natural only inasmuch as it is caused by the intrinsic material principle of human
nature—i.e., the body, which is composed of contraries.\textsuperscript{31}

If \textit{naturalis} in the context of natural law included everything consequent upon
universal nature, then life and death, procreation and contraception, medicine and murder
would all be equally natural for natural law purposes. It is evident, then, that the \textit{naturalis}
term in the expression “natural law” pertains to things that follow upon man’s form, not his
bodily corruptibility as such. Indeed, as St. Thomas makes clear in \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 3, the
“nature” according to which man is inclined in the natural law sense is “according to his
form.”\textsuperscript{32}

C. The Humanly Natural: \textit{Naturalis} Mediated by Rational Acts

It is evident that \textit{naturalis} in the sense relevant to natural law refers to form, not
matter. But what else can be said about the humanly natural? Are man’s natural inclinations
univocally the same as those of sea-water or stones, plankton or porpoises, or any other
particular natures? Do the things that are natural to man flow from his nature by necessity as
they do from such inanimates and irrational beings? To understand how the humanly natural,
for St. Thomas, is different from the natural with respect to irrational things, it is important to
begin with the kind of form man has:

That is said to be natural to a thing which is fitting to it according to the condition of its form,
through which it is constituted in such nature, as fire naturally tends upward. The form

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{In Rom.}, cap. 5, lect. 3, n. 416 [Marietti, 75]: “mors non sit ex peccato, sed magis ex natura, utpote
proveniens ex necessitate materiae. Est enim corpus humanum ex contrariis compositum. Unde est naturaliter
corrumpibile. … [S]ecundum principia intrinsecâ, et sic mors est ei naturalis. Unde Seneca dicit in libro de
remedii fortuitorum, quod mors natura est hominis, non poena.”

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170]: “ad legem naturae pertinet omne illud ad quod homo inclinatur
secundum suam naturam. Inclinatur autem unumquodque naturaliter ad operationem sibi convenientem
secundum suam formam, sicut ignis ad calefaciendum. Unde cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis,
naturalis inclinatio inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem.”
however through which man is man, is itself reason and intellect. Whence he naturally tends toward that which is fitting to him according to reason and intellect.  

As we saw in Chapter III, man has generic, specific, and individual “natures.” Certain things are “natural” to man’s generic animal nature, while other things are natural to man’s specific nature. Still other things correspond to a man’s individual nature. But these distinctions do little to explain the naturalness of those things that are natural to man according to his specific nature, i.e., the rationally or “humanly” natural things. St. Thomas writes that “to the natural law belongs those things to which a man is inclined naturally: and among these it is proper to man to be inclined to act according to reason.”

33 In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 1 [Mand. 2.992]: “illud dicitur esse naturale alicui rei quod convenit sibi secundum conditionem suae formae, per quam in tali natura constituitur, sicut ignis naturaliter tendit sursum. Forma autem per quam homo est homo, est ipsa ratio et intellectus. Unde in illud quod est conveniens sibi secundum rationem et intellectum, naturaliter tendit.”

34 ST I-II, q. 63, a. 1 [Leon. 6.406]: “aliquid dicitur alicui homini naturale dupliciter, uno modo, ex natura speciei; alio modo, ex natura individui. Et quia unumquodque habet speciem secundum suam formam, individuatur vero secundum materiam; forma vero hominis est anima rationalis, materia vero corpus, id quod convenit homini secundum animam rationalem, est ei naturale secundum rationem speciei; id vero quod est ei naturale secundum determinatam corporis complexionem, est ei naturale secundum naturam individui.” See also De ver., q. 25, a. 6, ad 4 [Leon. 22/3.742:140–42] (“aliquid dicitur esse naturale dupliciter: vel quantum ad naturam speciei, vel quantum ad naturam individui”); In III Sent., d. 20, q. 1, a. 1, qc. 1, ad 1 (“naturale dupliciter dicitur. Uno modo id quod consequitur ex principiis speciei”); In Rom., cap. 1, lect. 8, n. 149 [Marietti, 28] (sin is contra naturam hominis according to either rational or animal nature). Things that are natural to the human species include laughter and acts of virtue. ST I-II, q. 51, a. 1 [Leon. 325–26] (“aliquid potest esse naturale alicui dupliciter. Uno modo, secundum naturam speciei, sicut naturale est homini esse risibile, et igni ferri sursum.”); In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1 [Parma 7/2.918] (“naturae hominis ad aliquod inclinat dupliciter. Uno modo quia est conveniens naturae generis; et hoc est commune omnibus animalibus: alio modo quia est conveniens naturae differentiae qua species humana abundat a genere, inquantum est rationalis; sicut actus prudentiae et temperantiae.”). But some aspects of a man’s bodily nature—e.g., having two legs—are proper to the species. ST I-II, q. 63, a. 1 [Leon. 6.406]: “Quod enim est naturale homini ex parte corporis secundum speciem, quodammodo refertur ad animam, inquantum scilicet tale corpus est tali animae proportionatum.”

35 Examples of individual variations are skin color, proneness to sickness or health, dispositions to particular passions, and certain aptitudes and virtues. See, e.g., ST I-II, q. 51, a. 1 [Leon. 325–26] (“naturale est Socrati vel Platonis esse aegrotativum vel sanativum, secundum propriam complexionem”); ST I-II, q. 63, a. 1 [Leon. 6.406] (“unus homo habet naturalem aptitudinem ad scientiam, alius ad fortitudinem, alius ad temperantiam”); In IV Ethic., lect. 10, n. 24 [Leon. 47/2.236:253–55] (“si aliquis naturaliter inclinatur ad aliquam passionem, puta ad verecundiam, oportet eum naturaliter habere talem colorum, qui competat verecundiae.”).

36 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 4 [Leon. 7.171-2].
Acting according to reason takes many forms, and St. Thomas frequently refers to various natural inclinations pertaining to reason. With regard to moral action in particular, man is naturally inclined to the good in accord with his rational nature. Although St. Thomas sometimes speaks in terms of reason bringing order to the natural inclinations, clearly his understanding of human natural inclination in the proper sense encompasses both natural reason and the whole man in his proper order.

But how, for St. Thomas, are the rational goods natural? Do they flow immediately from man’s nature, or are they somehow mediately and reducibly natural? In what way are,

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37 In numerous texts, he speaks of natural inclinations that expressly pertain to reason. In the speculative order, man has a rational natural inclination to know the truth about God (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2); to the contemplation of rational truth inasmuch as all men naturally desire to know (In VII Ethic., lect. 13 n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:155-68]); to truth (In I De caelo, lect. 7 n. 7 [Leon. 3.30]; In I Phys., lect. 10, n. 5 [Leon. 2.34]); to scientia (De ver., q. 22, a. 5, ad 12 [Leon. 22/3.625:321-29]); to his proper operation, which is to understand, and therefore to possess scientific knowledge (In I Meta., lect. 1, n. 3 [Marietti 6]); to know the future by human means (not by divination) (ST II-II, q. 95, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 9.312]); and to assent to first principles (ST I, q. 83, a. 2 [Leon. 5.309]). The intellect, considered as a distinct power, is inclined to its act by natural appetite (De ver., q. 22, a. 12, ad 2 [Leon. 22/3.642:127-30]).

38 In the moral order, man has a natural inclination to act according to reason (ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.154]), to the good according to his rational nature (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]), and to do what is consonant with the eternal law (ST I-II, q. 93 a. 6 [Leon. 7.166]). It is proper to man to be inclined to act in accord with reason, e.g., to restore or not restore deposits according to circumstances (ST I-II, q. 94 a. 4 [Leon. 6.172]). See also ST I-II, q. 93, a. 6 ad 2 [Leon. 7.167] (natural inclination to do those things which are of the eternal law); ST I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273] (natural inclination to pursue good and avoid evil); In II Sent., d. 39, q. 3, a. 1, s.c. 2 [Mand. 2.995] (inclination to good natural to man according to the spark of reason); In Rom., cap. 7, lect. 3, n. 567 [Marietti, 103] (inclination of man according to reason to will the good and flee evil is according to nature); In III Sent., d. 29 q. 1 a. 3 [Moos 3.929] (inclination of the nature of man insofar as he is man never contradicts the inclination of virtue, but is in conformity with it); In V Ethic., lect. 12 [Leon. 47/2.305.63-66] (natural inclination of reason to discern the turpitudinous from the honorable); In IV Sent., d. 27, q. 2, a. 2 [Parma 7/2.932] (natural reason inclines more to certain things (e.g., betrothal) than to other things); In II Sent., d. 42, q. 2, a. 5 [Mand. 2.1085] (reason’s natural inclination to its end is a certain natural rectitude).

39 The will wills not only the good in general or the rational good, but also all the objects which comprise man’s good in due order. ST I-II, q. 10, a. 1 [Leon. 6.83]: “naturaliter homo vult non solum objectum voluntatis, sed etiam alia quae conveniunt alis potentissi, ut cognitionem veri, quae convenit intellectui; et esse et vivere et alia huiusmodi, quae respiciunt consistentiam naturalem; quae omnia comprehenduntur sub objecto voluntatis, sicut quaedam particularia bona.” Temperance, for example, is natural to man as man, even though it is contrary to animal nature in abstraction from humanity. ST II-II, q. 141, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 10.122]. See discussion of temperance in Chapter III.
for example, virtue, politics, and religion natural to man? Two further distinctions are in order between two distinct pairs of senses of naturalis.

1. Distinction: Entirely Intrinsic vs. Partly Extrinsic

In modern parlance, “natural” suggests that which is necessary according to the laws or forces of nature. The natural is spontaneous, automatic, and blind. For St. Thomas, in one sense, naturalis can refer to the natural thing itself or to whatever operations flow immediately from such nature. But at the same time, naturalis has the slightly different sense of “that to which a thing is inclined as a result of its nature.” Thus, the natural is not limited to things that flow out of the nature but also means those things towards which, as it were, the nature flows. “Natural” inclination is always relational and teleological. It is an inclination towards some thing, action, or motion that accords with the nature of the thing inclining. The natural is not simply consequent upon, but also “fitting with respect to” (conveniens) the underlying nature.

Some “natural ends” are more immediate to the nature, while others are more remote. In the case of fire or a stone, the natural end is readily apparent. Fire, in an immediate way consequent upon its form, is always inclined to heat and to move upwards.

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40 ST I, q. 82, a. 1 [Leon. 5.293] (“dicitur aliquid naturale, quia est secundum inclinationem naturae”); In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.918] (“dicitur naturale, ad quod natura inclinat”). See Schütz, s.v., “naturalis”: “dasjenige, wozu ein Ding seiner Natur zufolge hinneigt.”

41 ST I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 6.60]: “naturale dicitur quod est secundum inclinationem naturae.”

42 By “end,” I mean in a wide sense to include, for example, the terminus of a natural motion, the object or proper operation of a power, or the final end of human life.

43 See, e.g., De ver., q. 1, a. 5, ad 13 [Leon. 22/1.20:359-61] (NI of fire to be moved upwards always, unless impeded); De malo, q. 6 [Leon. 23.148:300-4] (from natural form, fire has NI to one act, to be always hot); In I Meta., lect. 1, n. 3 [Marietti 6] (NI of fire to proper operation, i.e., to make warm).
Likewise the stone’s heavy nature causes it to move downwards—its natural operation unfolds “automatically” and entirely from an intrinsic principle.  

The distinction between the wholly intrinsically natural and the partly intrinsically natural is most starkly illustrated by an analogy involving the art of medicine:

[S]omething may be called natural in two ways: first, because it entirely is from the nature; secondly, because it is partly from nature, and partly from an extrinsic principle. For instance, when a man is healed by himself, his health is entirely from nature; but when a man is healed by means of medicine, health is partly from nature, partly from an extrinsic principle.

St. Thomas extends this analogy to certain natural habits in man:

Thus, then, if we speak of habit as a disposition of the subject in relation to form . . . this disposition may be either entirely from nature, or partly from nature, and partly from an extrinsic principle, as we have said of those who are healed by means of art. But the habit which is a disposition to operation, and whose subject is a power of the soul . . . may be natural . . . in respect of the specific nature, on the part of the soul itself, which, since it is the form of the body, is the specific principle . . .

This distinction applies to both the apprehensive powers and the appetitive power, in each of which there are certain natural habits which exist partly from nature and partly from some extrinsic principle. In the apprehensive powers:

[T]here may be a natural habit by way of a beginning, both in respect of the specific nature, and in respect of the individual nature. This happens with regard to the specific nature, on the part of the soul itself: thus the understanding of first principles is called a natural habit. For it is owing to the very nature of the intellectual soul that man, having once grasped what is a

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44 See, e.g., In III Sent., d. 22, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 1: “motus dupliciter naturalis. Uno modo quia in eo quod movetur est principium activum motus; et sic corpora gravia et levia moventur naturaliter. Alio modo quia in eo quod movetur, est dispositio naturalis, per quam aliquid est mobile ab aliquo movente; et hoc contingit dupliciter.” See also, e.g., In II Sent., d. 42, q. 1, a. 3, ad 5 (what retards the motion of a heavy body does not take away its gravity and inclination to the end); In I Meta., lect. 1, n. 3 [Marietti 6] (NI to its proper operation, i.e., to be moved downwards); In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 3, a. 1, qc. 1 [Parma 7/2.1214] (NI to be moved towards its perfection, i.e., downwards).

45 ST I-II, q. 51, a. 1 [Leon. 325-26]: “potest dici aliquid naturale dupliciter, uno modo, quia totum est a natura; alio modo, quia secundum aliquid est a natura, et secundum aliquid est ab exteriori principio. Sicut cum aliquis sanatur per seipsum, tota sanitas est a natura, cum autem aliquis sanatur auxilio medicinae, sanitas partim est a natura, partim ab exteriori principio.”

46 ST I-II, q. 51, a. 1 [Leon. 325-26]: “Sic igitur si loquamur de habitu secundum quod est dispositio subiecti in ordine ad formam . . . huiusmodi dispositio potest esse vel totaliter a natura, vel partim a natura et partim ab exteriori principio, sicut dictum est de his qui sanantur per artem. Sed habitus qui est dispositio ad operationem, cuius subiectum est potentia animae . . . potest quidem esse naturalis . . . [s]ecundum quidem naturam speciei, secundum quod se tenet ex parte ipsius animae, quae, cum sit forma corporis, est principium specificum.”
whole and what is a part, should at once perceive that every whole is larger than its part; and in like manner with regard to other such principles. Yet what is a whole, and what is a part—this he cannot know except through the intelligible species which he has received from phantasms: and for this reason, the Philosopher at the end of the Posterior Analytics shows that knowledge of principles comes to us from the senses.47

With regard to the appetitive powers, however,

no habit is natural in its beginning, on the part of the soul itself, as to the substance of the habit; but only as to certain principles thereof, as, for instance, the principles of common law are called the ‘nurseries of virtue.’ The reason of this is because the inclination to its proper objects, which seems to be the beginning of a habit, does not belong to the habit, but rather to the very nature of the powers.48

St. Thomas uses the same intrinsic-extrinsic distinction to explain how it is natural for a woman to conceive a son, even though she cannot do so by herself. A woman cannot conceive a son naturally in the sense that such conception results necessarily from a sufficient principle within the woman. Conceiving a son is therefore not natural in the way that it is natural to earth (*terra*) to fall downward.49 But it is natural to a woman to conceive a son in the second, partly extrinsic sense.

Something is called natural for a thing because it has a natural inclination to it, although it does not have within itself a sufficient principle from which it necessarily follows. In this

47 ST I-II, q. 51, a. 1 [Leon. 325-26]: “Sunt ergo in hominibus aliqui habitus naturales, tanquam partim a natura existentes et partim ab externo principio; aliter quidem in apprehensivis potentiis, et aliter in appetitivis. In apprehensivis enim potentiis potest esse habitus naturalis secundum inchoationem, et secundum naturam speciei, et secundum naturam individui. Secundum quidem naturam speciei, ex parte ipsius animae, sicut intellectus principiorum dicitur esse habitus naturalis. Ex ipsa enim natura animae intellectualis, convenit homini quod statim, cognito quid est totum et quid est pars, cognoscat quod omne totum est maius sua parte, et simile est in ceteris. Sed quid sit totum, et quid sit pars, cognoscere non potest nisi per species intelligibiles a phantasmatibus acceptas. Et propter hoc philosophus, in fine posteriorum, ostendit quod cognitio principiorum provenit nobis ex sensu.”

48 Ibid. “Secundum vero naturam individui, est aliquis habitus cognoscitivus secundum inchoationem naturalis, inquantum unus homo, ex dispositione organorum, est magis aptus ad bene intelligendum quam alius, inquantum ad operationem intellectus indigemus virtutibus sensitivis. In appetitivis autem potentiiis non est aliquis habitus naturalis secundum inchoationem, ex parte ipsius animae, quantum ad ipsam substantiam habitus, sed solum quantum ad principia quaedam ipsius, sicut principia iuris communis dicitur esse seminalia virtutum. Et hoc ideo, quia inclinatio ad obiecta propria, quae videtur esse inchoatio habitus, non pertinet ad habitum, sed magis pertinet ad ipsam rationem potentiarum.”

49 De ver., q. 24, a. 10, ad 1 [Leon. 22/3.707:340-45]: “aliquid alicui naturale, quia habet naturalem inclinationem in illud, quamvis in se non habeat sufficiens illius principium ex quo necessario consequatur; sicut mulieri dicitur naturale concipere filium, quod tamen non potest nisi semine maris suspeo.”
sense it is said to be natural for a woman to conceive a son though she cannot do so without receiving the male seed.\textsuperscript{50}

As is the case with human conception, a simpler version of the same distinction applies to a range of generically animal activities mediated by extrinsic principles. For example, it is natural for the wolf to eat the sheep, even though “sheep” does not flow immediately from the nature of the wolf. The wolf has a natural judgment by which it recognizes its prey, but it must first be presented with the prey as an object of apprehension. That is, there must be a sheep, and the wolf must first see it, in order for the sequence of natural activities that comprises the wolf’s preying upon the sheep for food to unfold. The sheep is, in this way, an extrinsic principle. This intrinsic-extrinsic distinction goes only so far in explaining the humanly natural. Animals are more complex than stones, but the notion of an animal acting “by instinct” is similar to the notion of an inanimate thing’s necessary operation. The brute animal’s good is “uniform”:

Because the known good is the object of animal and rational appetites, where this good is always the same, there can be a natural inclination in appetite and a natural judgment in the cognitive power, as happens in beasts which have few activities because of the weakness of the active power which extends to few. In all things of the same species there is the same unchanging good. Hence they have a natural inclination to it and a natural judgment in the cognitive power with respect to that uniform good.\textsuperscript{51}

“From this natural judgment and desire it comes about,” for example, “that all swallows build their nests in the same way and all spiders spin a web in the same

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{De virt. comm.}, a. 6 [Marietti 722]: “[Q]uia aliquod bonum apprehensus oportet esse objectum appetitus animalis et rationalis; ubi ergo istud bonum uniformiter se habet, potest esse inclinationi naturalis in appetitu, et iudicium naturale in vi cognitiva, sicut accidit in brutis. Cum enim sint paucarum operationum propter debilitatem principii activi quod ad paucu se extendit; est in omnibus unius speciei bonum uniformiter se habens. Unde per appetitum naturalem inclinationem habent in id, et per vim cognitivam naturale iudicium habent de illo proprio bono uniformiter se habente.”
way, and so it is with all beasts."  

But is everything that is "natural" to man natural in the same simple way that it is natural to fire to move upwards or to the wolf to pursue its prey? A closer examination of the role of the apprehensive faculties—both sensitive and rational—helps to explain both the animately natural and the humanly natural.

2. Distinction: Out of Natural Principles Alone vs. Perfected by Apprehensive Powers

What is "natural" for man is not limited to things that "automatically" result from his biological nature or even his substantial form. St. Thomas says that "a movement is said to be natural, because nature inclines thereto." But nature inclines to a motion in two ways:

First, so that it is entirely accomplished by nature, without any operation of the apprehensive faculty: thus to have an upward movement is natural to fire, and to grow is the natural movement of animals and plants. Secondly, a movement is said to be natural, if nature inclines thereto, though it be accomplished by the apprehensive faculty alone: since . . . the movements of the cognitive and appetitive faculties are reducible to nature as to their first principle. In this way, even the acts of the apprehensive power, such as understanding, feeling, and remembering, as well as the movements of the animal appetite, are sometimes said to be natural.  

Thus, for man, the "natural" is not limited to those things over which he has no control. The fact that man has "a soul, or hands, or feet" is beyond his control, but these

52 De virt. comm., a. 6 [Marietti 722]: "Et ex hoc naturali iudicio et naturali appetitu provenit quod omnis hirundo uniformiter facit nidum, et quod omnis aranea uniformiter facit telam; et sic est in omnibus aliis brutis considerare."

53 ST I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273-74]: "aliquis motus dicitur naturalis, quia ad ipsum inclinat natura. Sed hoc contingit dupliciter. Uno modo, quod totum perficitur a natura, absque aliqua operatione apprehensivae virtutis, sicut moveri sursum est motus naturalis ignis, et augeri est motus naturalis animalium et plantarum. Alio modo dicitur motus naturalis, ad quem natura inclinat, licet non perficiatur nisi per apprehensionem, quia . . . motus cognitivae et appetitivae virtutis reducuntur in naturam, sicut in principium primum. Et per hunc modum, etiam ipsi actus apprehensivae virtutis, ut intelligere, sentire et memorari, et etiam motus appetitus animalis, quandoque dicuntur naturales." Cf. ST I-II, q. 10, a. 1 [Leon. 6.83]: "illud dicitur esse naturale rei, quod convenit ei secundum suam substantiam. Et hoc est quod per se inest rei. In omnibus autem, ea quae non per se insunt, reducuntur in aliquid quod per se inest, sicut in principium. Et ideo necesse est quod, hoc modo accipiendo naturam, semper principium in his quae conveniunt rei, sit naturale. Et ideo necesse est quod, hoc modo accipiendo naturam, semper principium in his quae conveniunt rei, sit naturale. Et hoc manifeste apparat in intellectu, nam principia intellectualis cognitionis sunt naturaliter nota. Similiter etiam principium motuum voluntariorum oportet esse aliquid naturaliter volitum."
natural givens do not exhaust what is natural for man.\textsuperscript{54} St. Thomas writes that something “is said to be natural to a thing, which befits (convenit) it according to its substance.”\textsuperscript{55} In some cases, the befitting thing “is that which is of itself in the thing.”\textsuperscript{56} Man is like the other animals in that the things that are fitting to their respective natures must be achieved or obtained through acts of the apprehensive powers:

For there is a certain natural appetite in some things from apprehension, as the wolf naturally desires to kill the animals on which it feeds and man naturally desires happiness; yet for those things that lack apprehension, from the inclination of natural principles alone, which in each is called the natural appetite, as the heavy thing seeks to be in the lower place.\textsuperscript{57}

But man’s good, unlike the brute animal’s, is varied and complex, and must be further specified:

But man has many and different activities because of the nobility of his active principle, the soul, whose power extends in a way to an infinity of things. Therefore, the natural appetite for the good does not suffice for man, or the natural judgment for acting well, unless they be further determined and perfected.\textsuperscript{58}

Man’s natural inclination alone does not suffice, because of variations of circumstance:

A man is inclined by natural appetite to seek his proper good, but since this varies in many ways and because man’s good consists of many things, there cannot be a natural appetite in

\textsuperscript{54}ST I-II, q. 93, a. 4 [Leon. 7.165].
\textsuperscript{55}ST I-II, q. 10, a. 1 [Leon. 6.83]: “Illum dicitur esse naturale rei, quod convenit ei secundum suam substantiam. Et hoc est quod per se inest rei. In omnibus autem, ea quae non per se insunt, reducuntur in aliquid quod per se inest, sicut in principium. Et ideo nescesse est quod, hoc modo accipiendo naturam, semper principium in his quae conveniunt rei, sit naturale.”
\textsuperscript{57}SCG II, cap. 55, n. 13 [Leon. 13.395]: “Naturalis enim appetitus quibusdam quidem inest ex apprehensione: sicut lupus naturaliter desiderat occisionem animalium ex quibus pascitur, et homo naturaliter desiderat felicitatem. Quibusdam vero absque apprehensione, ex sola inclinatione naturalium principiorum, quae naturalis appetitus in quibusdam dicitur: sicut grave appetit esse deorsum.”
\textsuperscript{58}De virt. comm. a. 6 [Marietti 722]: “Homo autem est multarum operationum et diversarum; et hoc propter nobilitatem sui principii activi, scilicet animae, cuius virtus ad infinita quodammodo se extendit. Et ideo non sufficeret homini naturalis appetitus boni, nec naturale iudicium ad recte agendum, nisi amplius determinetur et perficiatur.”
man for this determinate good given all the conditions needed if it is to be good for him, since
this varies widely according to the condition of persons, times, and places and the like.59

Obviously, the animal desire to kill animals and the rational desire for happiness, though
similar at a high level of generality, are quite different. The natural, for man, goes far beyond
the determinations of material or biological necessity. It is through the “apprehensive
faculties” and their corresponding appetites, especially reason and will, respectively, that
nature inclines man to those things which are fitting to him as man and thereby enables him
to achieve properly human ends.60 The “acts of the apprehensive power,” particularly the acts
of reason and will in man, are thus the means by which characteristically human actions, arts,
and societies come into being.61 Man achieves the ends proper to his nature through such acts
and institutions.

Accordingly, many of the human natural inclinations St. Thomas describes are
intelligible only if naturalis has a broader sense than what is dictated by physical necessity.
In the case of man, what is natural to him is that which is fitting to his form, that is, the form
through which man is man.62 The humanly natural encompasses a wide field of activity. Man
does not lunge at each perceived good as a beast pounces upon its prey. In the speculative
order, for man, knowledge is natural inasmuch as it is “reducible” to a natural principle. In

59 De virt. comm., a. 6 [Marietti 722]: “Per naturalem siquidem appetitum homo inclinatur ad
appetendum proprium bonum; sed cum hoc multipliciter varietur, et in multis bonum hominis consistat; non
potuit homini inesse naturalis appetitus huius boni determinati, secundum conditiones omnes quae requiruntur
ad hoc quod sit ei bonum; cum hoc multipliciter varietur secundum diversas conditiones personarum et
temporum et locorum, et huiusmodi.”

60 ST I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273-74]. The natural appetite is distinct from the sensitive and rational
appetites, but nature is at the root of all appetite. See, e.g., ST I, q. 80, a. 1 [Leon. 5.282]. The sensitive and
rational appetites, which follow upon apprehension, are distinct from, but rooted in, natural appetite. See, e.g.,
De virt. comm., a. 6 [Marietti 722]. See discussion of same in Chapter VI.

61 Act of the apprehensive power also includes acts of the sensitive appetite. In this since, even
irrational animals are inclined by acts of the apprehensive powers, not merely by natural necessity in the way,
e.g., fire necessarily moves upwards. When the wolf spies the lamb, the wolf is inclined to pursue and eat its
prey. See SCG II, cap. 55, n. 13 [Leon. 13.395].

62 In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 1 [Mand. 2.992].
the moral order, man desires the good in general and, accordingly, the will wills everything that is good for man: being, life, knowledge and, in turn, all the particular goods that constitute and further each of those three goods in due order.\textsuperscript{63} Man, for example, has a natural inclination to live in society, to know the truth, and to offer sacrifice to God.\textsuperscript{64}

St. Thomas is particularly insistent on the naturalness of political life and of man’s tendencies to live within legal institutions. As he says, following Aristotle, man is a “social animal.”\textsuperscript{65} Man is called “naturally political” because “natural reason dictates that men live together since one man does not suffice to himself in all things which pertain to life.”\textsuperscript{66} Accordingly, he is naturally inclined “to live in society” and has a natural inclination to the political common good and the “civil good.”\textsuperscript{67} Although each man is a whole in his own right, he also stands as a part in relation to the common good of the whole society.\textsuperscript{68}

But society does not follow from human nature as an ant colony or a V-formation of flying geese follows from formican or anserine natures. Man, through his reason and freedom, devises conventions and arts that further the perfection of the multitude. That which

\textsuperscript{63} *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.624:196-203].
\textsuperscript{64} *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170] (natural inclination to life in society); *In IV Sent.*, d. 26, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.918] (there is a natural inclination to marriage, but marriage does not result from natural necessity); *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.624:196-201] (natural inclination to knowledge of truth); *ST* II-II, q. 85, a. 1 [Leon. 9.215] (natural inclination to give sacrifice to God).
\textsuperscript{65} *ST* I-II, q. 95, a. 4 [Leon. 7.178]: “homo est naturaliter animal sociale.”
\textsuperscript{66} *In IV Sent.*, d. 26, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.918]: “Sicut enim naturalis ratio dictat ut homines simul cohabitent, quia unus homo non sufficit sibi in omnibus quae ad vitam pertinent, ratione cujus dicitur homo naturaliter politicus.”
\textsuperscript{67} *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170] (NI to live in society); *In III Sent.*, d. 33, q. 2, a. 4, qc. 3 [Moos 3.1065] (NI to civil and natural good of man).
\textsuperscript{68} *Quodlibet* I, q. 4 a. 3 [Leon. 25/2.188:73-75] (NI of the good citizen to expose himself to mortal danger for the common good); *ST* I, q. 60, a. 5 [Leon. 5.104] (NI of virtuous citizen to expose himself to mortal danger for the preservation of the whole republic); *ST* II-II, q. 26, a. 3 [Leon. 8.211-12] (NI of man to suffer damage to his own property and person for sake of the common good); *ST* I-II, q. 87, a. 1 [Leon. 7.121] (NI of man to repress those who rise up against him). On parts and wholes in relation to law and the common good, see Michael Baur, “Law and Natural Law,” in *Oxford Handbook on Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleanor Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 238-44.
is “according to man’s pleasure” (ad placitum) is not, as such, opposed to that which is natural and, indeed, it is necessary for man to prefer one thing or another, within the bounds of reason, in order to fulfill his nature. For St. Thomas, what we would broadly call “convention” is not merely that which is necessary to overcome a brutish or stingy nature. Convention, at its best, completes our rational nature. “Man is by nature a conventional animal,” in James Murphy’s apt description.

The “common human nature” is naturally inclined to “various offices and acts,” including those of the arts of husbandry, agriculture, and construction, as well as those of the institutions of married life and contemplative life. It is also in this sense that the ius gentium is part of the natural law and that human positive law is derived from the natural law. The natural law itself changes “by addition” through the development of such useful arts and institutions. Although these things are not in themselves natural, it is natural for man to

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69 In his discussion of whether offering sacrifices is of the natural law, Thomas considers the objection that sacrifice is not natural because words (used in sacrificial rites) “signify not naturally but by the pleasure of man.” ST II-II, q. 85 a. 1 arg. 3 [Leon. 9.215]: “Voces . . . quae sunt praecepta inter signa . . . non significant naturaliter, sed ad placitum, secundum philosophum.” In reply, Thomas shows that the particular determination of signs is the fulfillment of man’s natural ability to express his concepts through signs. ST II-II q. 85 a. 1 ad 3 [Leon. 9.216]: “significare conceptus suos est homini naturale, sed determinatio signorum est secundum humanum placitum.”

70 The OED defines “convention” in the relevant sense as “General agreement or consent, deliberate or implicit, as constituting the origin and foundation of any custom, institution, opinion, etc., as embodied in any accepted usage, standard of behaviour, method of artistic treatment, or the like.” OED, s.v. “convention.” Tellingly, the OED divides nature from convention in one definition: “In a bad sense: Accepted usage become artificial and formal, and felt to be repressive of the natural in conduct or art; conventionalism.” Ibid.


72 In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 2 [Parma 7/2.919] (NI of common human nature to various offices and acts such as husbandry, married life, contemplative life); ibid., ad 4 (NI to what is necessary for the perfection of one (which natural perfections are common to all) distinct from NI to what is necessary for the perfection of the multitude (e.g., agriculture et construction)).

73 ST I-II, q. 95, a. 4 ad 1 [Leon. 7.178]: “ius gentium est quidem aliquo modo naturale homini, secundum quod est rationalis, inquantum derivatur a lege naturali per modum conclusionis quae non est multum remota a principiis.”
devise and engage in these activities. Although, by nature alone, man is naked, property-less, and free, his natural reason has shown him the utility of clothing, private property, and servitude.\footnote{ST I-II, q. 94, a. 5 and ad 3 [Leon. 7.172-73] (slavery and private property are additions to the natural law “ad utilitatem humanae vitae”); ST I-II, q. 94, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 7.173] (“possemus dicere quod hominem esse nudum est de iure naturali, quia natura non dedit ei vestitum, sed ars advenit. Et hoc modo communis omnium possessio, et omnium una libertas, dicitur esse de iure naturali . . .”)}

A particularly good example, to which St. Thomas expressly applies the distinction between the necessarily natural and the humanly natural, is marriage:

A thing is said to be natural in two ways. First, as resulting of necessity from the principles of nature; thus upward movement is natural to fire. In this way matrimony is not natural, nor are any of those things that come to pass at the intervention or motion of the free-will. Secondly, that is said to be natural to which nature inclines although it comes to pass through the intervention of the free-will . . . in this way matrimony is natural, because natural reason inclines thereto.\footnote{In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.918]: “aliquid dicitur esse naturale dupliciter. Uno modo sicut ex principiis naturae ex necessitate causatum, ut moveri sursum est naturale igni etc. et sic matrimonium non est naturale, nec aliquid eorum quae mediante libero arbitrio complentur. Alio modo dicitur naturale ad quod natura inclinat, sed mediante libero arbitrio completur . . . et hoc modo etiam matrimonium est naturale, quia ratio naturalis ad ipsum inclinat.” Cf. In IV Sent., d. 26 q. 1 a. 1 ad 1 [Parma 7/2.918] (natural inclination to marriage, both generic and specific ends); In IV Sent., d. 26 q. 1 a. 1 ad 2 [Parma 7/2.918] (natural reason inclines to marriage); In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 2 [Parma 7/2.919] (natural inclination to marriage); In II Polit., lect. 3, n. 1 [Leon. 48.A127:20-23] (natural inclination to love relatives more than others, i.e., the more nature inclines one to love another, the more unfitting it is to harm the other); In III Sent., d. 29, q. 1, a. 7 [Moos 3.941] (a son is more naturally inclined to love his father than the father to love the son); In III Sent., d. 29 q. 1 a. 7 ad 1 [Moos 3.942] (natural inclination of father to love his son and of a son to subject himself to his father as between father and son); In III Sent., d. 37, q. 1, a. 2, qc. 1, ad 5 (natural inclination to honor one’s parents).} In this case, he further distinguishes between two ways in which natural reason inclines man to marriage, encompassing both ends of marriage in a distinctively human version of the coniunctio maris et feminae of Roman law.\footnote{In IV Sent., d. 26 q. 1 a. 1 [Parma 7/2.918]. Natural reason inclines to marriage in two ways: “Primo quantum ad principalem ejus finem, qui est bonum prolix: non enim intendit natura solum generationem ejus, sed traductionem, et promotionem usque ad perfectum statum hominis, inquantum homo est, qui est virtutis status. Unde, secundum philosophum, tria a parentibus habemus: scilicet esse, nutrimentum, et disciplinam. Filius autem a parente educari et instrui non posset, nisi determinatos et certos parentes haberet: quod non esset, nisi esset aliqua obligatio viri ad mulierem determinatam, quae matrimonium facit. Secundo quantum ad secundarium finem matrimonii, qui est mutuum obsequium sibi a conjugibus in rebus domesticis impensum. Sicut enim naturalis ratio dictat ut homines simul cohabitent, quia unus homo non sufficit sibi in omnibus quae ad vitam pertinent, ratione cujus dicitur homo naturaliter politicus; ita etiam eorum quibis indigetur ad}
The humanly natural encompasses all these things because reason is man’s nature and it is natural to act in accord with reason. As Robert Spaemann writes, “only in rational action does the concept of the natural fully come into its own. But not in such a way that reason simply takes the place of nature.”\(^{77}\) Instead, reason is the natural power by which man reaches his natural perfection. In the contemporary literature, there is relatively little discussion of the critical distinction between the reductionist senses of “natural” and the properly human sense of \textit{naturalis}.\(^{78}\) St. Thomas’s understanding of \textit{naturalis} stands in stark contrast to the physicalist and primitivist versions of modern “naturalness,” which stem from a procrustean notion of what is natural to man. For St. Thomas, that which is “humanly natural” starts with human nature (including man’s animal nature), but is perfected through characteristically human acts of intellect and will. Neither virtue, nor political life, nor religious ritual are themselves spontaneous outgrowths of nature. Yet man has natural inclinations to virtue, life in society, worship, many other properly human things.\(^{79}\)

D. Natural Inclination to Virtue

St. Thomas says man’s natural inclination is to act in accord with reason, “and this is

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humanam vitam, quaedam opera sunt competentia viris quaedam mulieribus; unde natura movet ut sit quaedam associatio viri ad mulierem, in qua est matrimonium.” Ibid. 


\(^{78}\) An exception is Angelo Campodonico, “Philosophical Anthropology Facing Aquinas’ Concept of Human Nature,” in \textit{Restoring Nature: Essays in Thomistic Philosophy and Theology}, ed. Michael M. Waddell, 46-68 (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2004), passim. For a good, older, articulation of this distinction, see Thomas Davitt, \textit{The Basic Values in Law: A Study of the Ethico-Legal Implications of Psychology and Anthropology} (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968), 16: “the gap sometimes depicted between the innate and the acquired is seen as substantially narrowed when it is recognized that whatever is acquired is acquired because of a disposition to acquire which is innate.” 

\(^{79}\) See \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170].
to act according to virtue.”

But in terms of a narrow physicalist or primitivist understanding of nature, nature and virtue seem to be opposites. Virtue is an overcoming of a brutish nature or a fashioning of something human out of the raw material of a neutral nature. Mill, for example, pits natural inclination against reason and virtue: “The acquisition of virtue has in all ages been accounted a work of labour and difficulty . . . and it assuredly requires in most persons a greater conquest over a greater number of natural inclinations to become eminently virtuous than transcendently vicious.”

In contrast to modern views, St. Thomas’s teleological understanding of *natura* and *naturalis* brings to light the naturalness of virtue. Nature by itself is only a principle, not the full flowering, of virtue. Man has an “innate” tendency to acquire virtue. But virtue is not natural in the first sense of *naturalis*—the virtues do not spring forth fully formed from the innate principles of raw nature. Rather, nature is the seed of the virtues, both generally and with respect to each of the specific virtues. Although some people are born with a stronger natural inclination (as Hume recognizes), the actual acquisition of virtue requires effort and struggle.

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80 *ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170]: “naturalis inclinatio inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem. Et hoc est agere secundum virtutem.”

81 Mill, *On Nature*, 3. Similarly, Hume, while recognizing certain “natural virtues” in man at the animal level, puts natural inclination at odds with the requirements of a rational morality: “A father knows it to be his duty to take care of his children: But he has also a natural inclination to it. And if no human creature had that inclination, no one cou’d lie under any such obligation. But as there is naturally no inclination to observe promises, distinct from a sense of their obligation; it follows, that fidelity is no natural virtue, and that promises have no force, antecedent to human conventions . . .” Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* II, v.

82 *ST I-II, q. 93, a. 6 [Leon. 7.166]: “et iterum unicumque rationali creaturae inest naturalis inclinatio ad id quod est consonum legi aeternae; sumus enim innati ad habendum virtutes . . .”

83 Excepting the theological virtues (which are “entirely from without”), all the virtues are in man “inchoatively.” *ST I-II*, q. 63, a. 1 [Leon. 6.406]. Indeed, “to every definite natural inclination there corresponds a special virtue.” *ST II-II*, q. 108, a. 2 [Leon. 9.411]: “Et ideo ad quamlibet inclinationem naturalem determinatam ordinatur aliqua specialis virtus.” The several virtues he expressly discusses in connection with natural inclination include: prudence (*In III Sent.*, d. 36, q. 1, a. 1 [Moos 3.1215-17]); justice (*ST II-II*, q. 85, a. 1 [Leon. 9.215]; *II-II*, q. 183, a. 4 [Leon. 10.449]); *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 11, n. 2 [Leon. 47/2.375:35-43]; *Super Mt.* [rep. Petri de Andria], cap. 41.3.; temperance (*In VI Ethic.*, lect. 11, n. 12 [Leon. 47/2.377:133-34]); fortitude (*Quodlibet XII*, q. 14 [Leon. 25/2.417-18:69-75]; *De virt. comm.*, a. 8, ad 10 [Marietti 729]; *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 11 n. 2 [Leon. 47/2.375:35-43]); studiousness (*ST II-II*, q. 166, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.344]); *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 11 n. 12 [Leon. 47/2.377:133-34]; *In III Sent.*, d. 36, q. 1, a. 1 [Moos 3.1215-17]); magnificence (*In VI Ethic.*, lect. 11 n. 12 [Leon. 47/2.377:166-70]); chastity and humility (*Lect. super Matth.* [rep. Petri de
or weaker inclination to a particular virtue by corporeal temperament, the flowering of virtue requires deliberate work—which work is itself natural in the second, properly human sense of *naturalis*. St. Thomas sometimes calls the natural inclination to virtue simply “natural virtue,” which is prior to the perfection of moral virtue.\(^{84}\) Virtue is a habit. The will’s natural inclination to goodness must be specified and perfected by habit.\(^{85}\)

As explained above, St. Thomas distinguishes between two senses of “natural.” In one way, something (e.g., fire’s upward motion) is caused by the necessity of natural principles. In a second way, “that is said to be natural to which nature inclines, but completed through the mediation of free choice, *as acts of virtue are said to be natural.*”\(^{86}\) St. Thomas thus applies the second, distinctively human sense of *naturalis* to acts of virtue. Acts of virtue are, in other words, humanly natural in the sense discussed above. Natural principles are required, but virtues are completed only through acts of reason and will.

1. **NI as “Soil” and “Seed” of Virtue**

Russell Hittinger describes the natural inclinations as the “soil for [the] virtues.”\(^{87}\) This metaphor is apt up to a point. Natural inclinations, mediated through deliberate action,

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\(^{84}\) *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 3, a. 4, qc. 3 [Moos 3.755]: “in homine ante completum esse virtutis moralis, existit quaedam naturalis inclinatio ad virtutem illam, quae dicitur virtus naturalis.” *Cf. In II Sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 1 [Mand. 2.992]: “quaedam inclinationes virtutum sive aptitudines praexistent naturaliter in ipsa natura rationali, quae virtutes naturales dicuntur, et etiam per exercitium et deliberationem complentur, ut in 6 Ethic. dicitur: ideo homo naturaliter in bonum tendit.”

\(^{85}\) *In II Sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2 [Mand. 2.992].

\(^{86}\) Emphasis added. *In IV Sent.*, d. 26, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.918]: “dicitur naturale ad quod natura inclinat, sed mediante libero arbitrio completur, sicut actus virtutum dicuntur naturales.”

give rise to perfected virtue, just as soil, properly tilled, gives rise to the full flower of plant life. But one must take care not to understand the natural inclinations as a mere medium in which the gardener (practical reason) plants the seeds of virtue. The natural inclinations are the seeds, not merely a neutral matter to virtue’s imposed form. The natural inclination to virtue is a determinate tendency that follows upon man’s rational nature: “virtue is related to things in us from nature, since we have a natural inclination to virtue.” The natural inclination to virtue follows upon man’s form: “each thing is inclined naturally to an operation that is suitable to it according to its form: thus fire is inclined to give heat. Wherefore, since the rational soul is the proper form of man, there is in every man a natural inclination to act according to reason: and this is to act according to virtue.”

Accordingly, the natural inclination of man insofar as he is man never contradicts the inclination of virtue. Rather than mere soil (material or environment), the natural inclinations to virtues are, in St. Thomas’s analogy, the “seeds” (seminaria) of virtue. In other words, the natural inclinations are the “beginning” (inchoatio) of virtue. To use still

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88 In I Polit., lect. 11, n. 3 [Leon. 48.A118:49-52]: “Virtus autem ad ea se habet, quae sunt nobis a natura. Habemus enim naturalem quamdam inclinationem ad virtutem.”
89 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170]: “Inclinatur . . . unumquodque naturaliter ad operationem sibi convenietem secundum suam formam, sicut ignis ad calefaciendum. Unde cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis, naturalis inclinatio inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem. Et hoc est agere secundum virtutem.”
90 In III Sent., d. 29, q. 1, a. 3 [Moos 3.929]: “inclinatio naturae hominis inquantum est homo, nunquam contradicit inclinationi virtutis, sed est ei conformis.”
91 In III Sent., d. 36, q. 1, a. 1 [Moos 3.1215-17]: “virtus dupliciter potest considerari. Uno modo secundum esse ipsius imperfectum, secundum quod seminaria virtutum insunt nobis a natura; et sic virtus dicitur quaedam naturalis inclinatio ad virtutis actum; et hoc modo una virtus potest haberi sine alia. Quidam enim sunt naturaliter apti ad liberalitatem, quidam sunt proni ad luxuriam ex natura.”
92 ST I-II, q. 63, a. 1 [Leon. 6.406]: “virtus est homini naturalis secundum quandam inchoationem. Secundum quidem naturam speciei, inquantum in ratione homini insunt naturaliter quaedam principia naturaliter cognita tam scibilib quam agendorum, quae sunt quaedam seminalia intellectualium virtutum et moralium; et inquantum in voluntate inest quidam naturalis appetitus boni quod est secundum rationem.” This “inchoate virtue” is a potency to actual virtue. De ver., q. 11, a. 1 [Leon. 22/2.350:259-64]: “virtutum habitus ante earum consummationem praexistent in nobis in quibusdam naturalibus inclinationibus, quae sunt quaedam virtutum inchoationes, sed postea per exercitium operum adducuntur in debitam consummationem.”
another planting metaphor, the natural inclinations are the “sap” rising from the “root” (radix) of rational nature to become the “fruit” of virtue.\footnote{See ST I-II, q. 85, a. 2 [Leon. 7.110]: “naturalis inclinatio ad virtutem . . . intelligitur ut media inter duo, fundatur enim sicut in radice in natura rationali, et tendit in bonum virtutis sicut in terminum et finem.”}

2. **Virtue Perfects Natural Inclination in a Teleological Order**

The naturalness of virtue must be understood in terms of natural finality. For St. Thomas, the good that completes man’s nature is virtue: “the good of nature . . . is the natural inclination to virtue, which is befitting to man from the very fact that he is a rational being; for it is due to this that he performs actions in accord with reason, which is to act virtuously.”\footnote{ST I-II, q. 85, a. 2 [Leon. 7.110]: “bonum naturae . . . est naturalis inclinatio ad virtutem. Quae quidem convenit homini ex hoc ipso quod rationalis est, ex hoc enim habet quod secundum rationem operetur, quod est agere secundum virtutem.”} The naturalness of virtue lies in the fact that it is the fitting completion of human nature which, in turn, inclines to virtue. As Hittinger writes, “the cultivation of the habits take [its] bearing from a pre-given teleological order.” “Nature,” he clarifies, “designates not only the quiddities of things—the formal cause which makes a thing what it is—but more importantly the finality governing completions.”\footnote{Russell Hittinger, “Natural Law and Virtue,” 43.}

The inclination of nature precedes the perfected habit of virtue:

In the appetitive powers . . . no habit is natural in its beginning, on the part of the soul itself, as to the substance of the habit; but only as to certain principles thereof . . . . The reason of this is because the inclination to its proper objects, which seems to be the beginning of a habit, does not belong to the habit, but rather to the very nature of the powers.\footnote{ST I-II, q. 51, a. 1 [Leon. 325-26]: “In appetitis autem potentiiis non est aliquis habitus naturalis secundum inchoationem, ex parte ipsius animae, quantum ad ipsum substantiam habitus, sed solum quantum ad principia quaedam ipsius . . . . Et hoc ideo, quia inclinatio ad obiecta propria, quae videtur esse inchoatio habitus, non pertinet ad habitum, sed magis pertinet ad ipsum rationem potentiarum.”}

Natural inclination is only the beginning of virtue, not perfect virtue. Although natural inclination itself, because it comes from the author of nature, has a certain natural
rectitude, it is nevertheless perfected by “another rectitude,” i.e., that of virtue. Habit, which is itself a certain inclination, is the terminus of nature, which, in other words, “completes the nature.” The perfection of virtue comes, not from natural inclination, but either from grace, political governance, or simply “being accustomed.” St. Thomas sometimes distinguishes between natural virtue and moral virtue, the moral being the perfection of the natural. But here again, in terms of the proper understanding of “natural” as St. Thomas uses the term in reference to man, the moral and the natural are not radically separate: “A thing is said to be natural to something if it is fitting to that thing according to the condition of its form, through which such nature is constituted. . . . But the form through which man is man, is reason and intellect itself.” Thus man naturally tends to those things that are fitting according to reason and intellect. Man has a natural inclination to virtue, even

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97 ST I, q. 60, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.98]: “sicut cognitio naturalis semper est vera ita dilectio naturalis semper est recta, cum amor naturalis nihil aliud sit quam inclinatione naturae indita ab auctore naturae. Dicere ergo quod inclinationio naturalis not sit recta, est derogare auctori naturae. Alia tamen est rectitudo naturalis delectionis, et alia est rectitudo caritatis et virtutis, quia una rectitudo est perfectiva alterius.”

98 The inclination of nature is prior to the inclination of habit. A virtue, as a habit, has its own proper inclination. The natural inclination is to one thing, while the inclination of habit is to many particular things. In III Sent., d. 33, q. 2, a. 3, ad 3 [Moos 3.1058]. Habit, though it is not nature itself, is a certain “second nature.” De ver., q. 24, a. 4, ad 11 [Leon. 22/3.692:278-81]: “facultas quae est per inclinationem habitus, addit supra potentiam aliquid quod est alterius naturae, scilicet habitum . . . .” Cf. Expos. De ebdom., lect. 2. On the distinction between inclinations of habit and natural inclinations, see Chapters I and VI.

99 Super Mt. [rep. Petri de Andria], cap. 4 l. 3 (“inclinatio et inchoatio est naturalis; sed perfectio, qua gratus homo redditur, est ex gratia, politica, et ex assuetudine”); In I Polit., lect. 11, n. 4 [Leon. 48.A118:56-58] (“homo, qui habet inclinationem ad virtutem, consequatur virtutem per studium alicuus gubernantis”); In I Polit., lect. 1, n. 33 [Leon. 48.A79:209-11] (“Homo enim est optimum animalium si perficiatur eo virtus, ad quam habet inclinationem naturalem. Sed si sit sine lege et iustitia, homo est pessimum omnium animalium.”). Being accustomed involves the virtue of prudence. If prudence is lacking, the beginnings of virtue do not become virtue properly speaking. ST I-II, q. 65, a. 1, ad 1: “Sicut etiam naturales inclinationes non habent perfectam rationem virtutis, si prudentia desit.”

100 In X Ethic., lect. 2, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.557:157-59]: “Sicut enim virtus est perfectio naturae, et propter hoc virtus moralis est melior quam virtus naturalis . . . .” Correlatively, vice is the corruption of nature. Ibid. [Leon. 47/2.557:160].

101 In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 1 [Mand. 2.992]: “illud dicitur esse naturale alicui rei quod convenit sibi secundum conditionem suae formae, per quam in tali natura constituitur, sicut ignis naturaliter tendit sursum. Forma autem per quam homo est homo, est ipsa ratio et intellectus. Unde in illud quod est conveniens sibi secundum rationem et intellectum, naturaliter tendit.”
though various acts of apprehension and will are required to bring the beginnings of virtue to their fruition in actual virtue.

**Conclusion**

David Gallagher aptly describes the humanly natural in terms of morality and freedom: “Moral goodness, for Aquinas, is never separate from nature; it is, rather, a natural fulfillment of perfection.” Nevertheless, as Gallagher also points out, “in the actualizing of natural perfections there lies a fundamental difference between moral agents and other beings, a difference which underlies the propensity to see a radical separation between nature and freedom.”

This propensity is that of modern readers of St. Thomas to take the word “natural” as signifying only the first sense of natural discussed above: that which follows “entirely from natural principles.” But as we have seen, the humanly natural is a second sense of natural, that which requires human action to complete. In Gallagher’s words,

> All beings have a natural goodness; most beings achieve that goodness by nature. But it is the singular privilege of free beings to attain their natural perfection, not by nature, but by choice. . . . [Yet] rational beings remain part of nature. In fact, it is precisely in this realm, in the realm of freedom, that nature reaches its fulfillment.

The nature of which man “remain[s]” a part is nature in the robustly analogical and teleological sense—nature which acts for its proper ends in the mode proper to each kind of thing. If “nature” is taken for something narrowly biological or primitive in the modern sense, St. Thomas’s understanding of “natural”—and especially the humanly natural—is unintelligible and, in turn, his understanding of natural inclination in the context of natural law is fatally obscured.

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103 Ibid., 60.
CHAPTER V

INCLINATIO NATURALIS, NATURAL EVILS, AND SINFUL INCLINATIONS

Nature is red in tooth and claw.
—Alfred Lord Tennyson, In Memoriam A. H. H. (1850)

Powerful currents in modern thought associate nature not with wholesomeness and spontaneity, but with wickedness and depravity instead. Arguing against natural law, Mill describes a sharp opposition between brutal nature and salutary artifice:

But even if it were true that every one of the elementary impulses of human nature has its good side, and may by a sufficient amount of artificial training be made more useful than hurtful; how little would this amount to, when it must in any case be admitted that without such training all of them, even those which are necessary to our preservation, would fill the world with misery, making human life an exaggerated likeness of the odious scene of violence and tyranny which is exhibited by the rest of the animal kingdom, except insofar as tamed and disciplined by man.¹

Classical protestant theology extends a similar critique of nature to the very core of man’s humanity. Man’s “inward part is wickedness itself,” in John Gill’s perfervid description of corrupt human nature.²

In Roman Catholic teaching as well, for all its emphasis on natural law, nature is hardly immune from the ravages of sin. The Baltimore Catechism teaches that, from original sin, “[t]he body is inclined to rebel against the soul, and the soul itself to rebel against God.”³ St. Thomas himself frequently says that sin and vice are, in various ways, natural and that there is, in man, a certain natural inclination to sin and vice.⁴ The parts of man’s nature that he has in common with other substances and animals can incline to sin to the extent they are not regulated by reason. Up to a point, this duality can be analyzed in terms of natural evils

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² John Gill, A Body of Doctrinal Divinity III (1796), ch. 11, sec. 3b.
³ Baltimore Catechism, q. 263.
⁴ See section D of this chapter below for examples.
and natural defects, which all somehow contribute to the perfection of the universe. But
the doctrine of fallenness is necessary to explain the brunt of the evil that besets human
nature. It is only the gift of original justice that halts the corruption of the human body in its
otherwise “natural” course and permits man to rule his lower passions within the unity of his
fully human nature. In the fallen world, many evil human tendencies appear to be, in some
way, natural. For example, as St. Thomas acknowledges, “the movement of anger tending to
murder, and the movement of desire tending to adultery, seem to be in us from nature
somewhat.”

In the violence and chaos of the fallen world, it is difficult to distinguish human
nature from its natural failures and, in turn, its natural failures from its fallenness. How does
St. Thomas account for these evils in nature? How does he distinguish the natural
inclinations—the erstwhile compass points of the natural law—from natural death and
corruption and the seemingly natural inclinations of man to sin and vice? In the concrete,
sinful world of human experience, is “fallenness” itself now part of nature, or can an
integrity—a nature in the proper sense of a principle of motion towards the good—be
distinguished from the rough and tumble of what the poet, backed by modern biology, calls
“nature red in tooth and claw”? Finally, what is reason’s role in keeping man’s sin-prone
nature “in order”?

In this chapter, I will address these questions in five sections. Section A establishes
that, for St. Thomas, nature is good and natural inclination, in the sense proper to natural law,
is only to the good. Section B explores the distinction between universal nature (the entire

\footnote{ST I-II, q. 108, a. 3, ad 1: “motus irae in homicidium tendens, et concupiscentiae motus tendens in adulterium, videntur aliqualiter nobis a natura inesse.”}
order of causality in the universe) and particular nature (the nature of a specific kind of thing) to account for the naturalness of certain natural evils, such as death and illness. Section C examines the theological notions of original sin and “fallen nature” to show that modern philosophers mistake the very fallenness of nature for nature itself. Section D analyzes a number of problematic texts in which St. Thomas seems to say that there are natural inclinations to sin and vice and distinguishes natural inclination in these contexts from natural inclination in the proper sense. Finally, section E investigates reason’s governance of unruly human inclinations.

A. Natural Inclination is Only to the Good

The *Baltimore Catechism* also teaches that, from original sin, man has a “strong inclination to evil . . . called concupiscence” which consists in “the continual efforts of our senses and appetites to lead our souls into sin.”

This inclination is natural in the narrow sense of being inborn, but it is not the inclination of nature itself, properly speaking. For example, in commenting on St. Paul’s statement that the Jews “were by nature children of wrath” (*natura filii irae*), St. Thomas makes clear that, in this context, “nature” means from birth in the state of original sin, not “nature as nature” (*natura ut natura*) because nature as such “is good and from God.”

Human nature is thus inherently good notwithstanding its fallen condition.

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6 *Baltimore Catechism*, qq. 259 and 263-64. “The body is inclined to rebel against the soul, and the soul itself to rebel against God.” Ibid., q. 263.

7 *In. Eph.*, cap. 2, lect. 1, n. 83 [Marietti, 2.23]: “dicit eramus natura, id est per originem naturae, non quidem naturae ut natura est, quia sic bona est et a Deo, sed naturae ut vitiata est, filii irae, id est vindictae . . . .”

8 Other examples of Thomas’s insistence on the goodness of nature(s) in a sinful world are in his discussion of the dietary precepts of the Old Law, where he repeatedly emphasizes that no animal or food is “unclean” by nature. *ST I-II*, q. 102, a. 6, ad 1 [Leon. 7.248] (“nulla genera ciborum immunda sunt, vel
St. Thomas’s account of nature as a principle of motion and rest and man’s proper nature in its substantial unity shows that nature, properly speaking, is good and inclines only to its own good. In numerous texts, St. Thomas affirms that natural inclination is only to the good and that everything contrary to natural inclination is sinful or vicious. Because nature is good, and everything inclines to something similar to itself, nature inclines only to the good.\(^9\) Nature inclines neither to evil nor falsehood.\(^10\) Everything contrary to natural inclination is a sin.\(^11\) More precisely, sin is contrary to rational nature.\(^12\) For St. Thomas, sin consists in “an action done for a certain end, and lacking due order to that end.”\(^13\) Right action is in accord with natural inclination to an end, but due order is lacking when an action departs from the rectitude of that natural inclination.\(^14\)

Whereas virtue perfects nature, vice corrupts it.\(^15\) The natural inclination to virtue is “depraved” (though not destroyed) by vicious habit.\(^16\) The nature of a thing is “chiefly the form from which that thing derives its species. Now man derives his species from his rational soul: and consequently whatever is contrary to the order of reason is, properly speaking,
contrary to the nature of man, as man.”

In this sense, vice is “against the nature of man, insofar as it is against the order of reason.”

The prudence of the flesh inclines to actions contrary to the law of God. But even in fallen man, his human nature, which is good inasmuch as it is in act, is not wholly corrupted or “replaced” by a different, intrinsically evil nature. Accordingly, there remains in man an inclination to do those things which are of the eternal law.

Sin, vice, evil inclinations and the like are all natural only in a secondary, derivative, and, with respect to man as man, improper sense. For St. Thomas, the nature of any substance is a principle of motion and rest per se and not per accidens. The proper inclination of the substantial nature of any substance is to its own good. The corruption of material bodies and the violence and cruelty of the animal kingdom are not natural to any particular nature as such. For example, the lion’s audacity is natural with respect to the good of the lion, but such audacity is cruelty for the lion’s prey.

To the extent that there are deformities of individual animals in nature, such deformities are failures or “monsters” which come about in virtue of a material impediment to the full actualization of form. Because every nature is good, a particular nature can have a natural inclination to an evil only “under the character [ratio] of some particular good.”

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17 ST I-II, q. 71, a. 2 [Leon. 7.5]: “Homo autem in specie constituitur per animam rationalem. Et ideo id quod est contra ordinem rationis, proprie est contra naturam hominis inquantum est homo.”

18 Ibid.: “vitium . . . tantum est contra naturam hominis, inquantum est contra ordinem rationis.”

19 ST I-II, q. 93, a. 6, ad 2 [Leon. 7.167]: “in nullo homine ita prudentia carnis dominatur, quod totum bonum naturae corrupatur. Et ideo remanet in homine inclinatio ad agendum ea quae sunt legis aeternae.”

20 Likewise the wolf is naturally evil to the sheep; it is natural for fire to heat water, or for water to extinguish fire, but unnatural for water to be evaporated or fire to be extinguished. De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:188-91].

21 De sub. sep., cap. 20 [Leon. 40.D77:79-84]: “Cum . . . omnis natura bona sit, impossibile est quod natura aliqua habeat inclinationem ad malum nisi sub ratione particularis boni.”
particular nature, even if it is evil for another particular nature. For example, “rage” (*furia*) is natural to a dog, but evil to its prey.\(^{22}\) The wolf is naturally evil only to the sheep.\(^{23}\)

Irrational things do not “sin.” Only rational creatures are culpably evil. But *peccare* has the wider sense of “going wrong” or “being at fault” which can apply to nature prior to any apprehension. The “monsters” of nature are nature’s failures. The question then arises whether any rational creatures are evil by nature and, as such, have a natural inclination (prior to cognition or choice) to commit evil acts. In several texts, St. Thomas considers the questions of whether demons are “naturally evil” and whether they have a “natural inclination to evil.”\(^ {24}\) St. Thomas makes clear that even demons are not *by nature* evil. These texts show, rather, the essential and ineradicable goodness of each created natural substance.

In the *De malo*, St. Thomas explains that something can be naturally evil in two ways: either its nature (or a property following on its nature) is itself evil or the thing has a natural inclination to evil.\(^ {25}\) Demons are not naturally evil in either sense. In the first sense, “that a thing . . . should be in itself naturally evil is impossible” because an evil is a privation of a perfection proper to a thing’s nature.\(^ {26}\) And “since every nature is good, it is impossible that some nature should have an inclination to evil . . . .”\(^ {27}\) Each demon, as a wholly intellectual, incorporeal substance, is therefore neither evil in itself nor naturally inclined to evil:

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\(^{22}\) Ibid. As St. Thomas explains, “Nihil enim prohibet aliquid quod est particulariter bonum alicui naturae, intantum dici malum inquantum repugnat perfectioni nobilioris naturae, sicut furiosum esse, quoddam bonum est cani, quod tamen malum est homini rationem habenti.” Ibid.

\(^{23}\) *De malo*, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:90-91].

\(^{24}\) *De sub. sep.*, cap. 20 [Leon. 40.D77:67]: “inclinationem naturalem ad malum.”

\(^{25}\) *De malo*, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:178-83]: “aliquid naturaliter esse malum, dupliciter intelligi potest. Uno modo ut malum sit natura ipsius, vel aliquid naturae eius, sive proprium accidens consequens naturam. Alio modo potest dici aliquid naturaliter malum, quia est ei naturalis inclination ad malum.”

\(^{26}\) *De malo*, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:191-92]: “quod aliquid . . . sit in se naturaliter malum, est impossible.”

\(^{27}\) *De sub. sep.*, cap. 20 [Leon. 40.D77:76-77]: “Cum enim omnis natura bona sit, impossibile est quod natura aliqua habeat inclinationem ad malum.” See also *ST* I, q. 48, a. 1 [Leon. 4.490].
in intellectual substances as such, the appetite is in respect to good simply; hence every natural inclination in them is to good simply; indeed since nature inclines to what is similar to itself, and since each thing according to its nature is good . . . it follows that the natural inclination is only to something good.  

But man, as both animal and intellect, is a special case. Men, unlike demons, can be naturally evil in a certain sense:

[A]nything that has a natural inclination to evil simply is a composite of two natures, the lower of which has an inclination to some particular good pleasing to it but contrary to the higher nature according to which good itself is taken into account. For example in man there is a natural evil to that which is agreeable to carnal sense contrary to the good of reason . . .

It is precisely because of man’s compound, intellectual-corporeal nature that he can be said to be naturally evil. St. Thomas’s point is not Manichaean. Man’s natural animality is not evil in itself. Rather, this animality, good in itself, becomes evil in man if and to the extent that it goes against or beyond the bounds of reason. For example, if the raging natural to a dog is found in man, it is an evil because it is contrary to reason. Carnal coniunctio is natural and good in itself:

[N]atural inclinations are present in things from God, Who moves all things. So, it is impossible for the natural inclination of a species to be toward what is evil in itself. But there is in all perfect animals a natural inclination toward carnal union. Therefore, it is impossible for carnal union to be evil in itself.

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28 De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:207-14]: “substantiis . . . intellectualibus, in quantum huiusmodi, inest appetitus respectu boni simpliciter; unde omnis naturalis inclinatio in eis est ad bonum simpliciter. Cum autem natura inclinet ad sibi simile, quia unumquodque secundum suam naturam bonum est, ut ostensum est; consequens est quod naturalis inclinatio non sit nisi in aliquod bonum.”

29 De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:230-38]: “cuicumque inest naturalis inclinatio ad malum simpliciter, hoc sit compositum ex duabus naturis, quarum inferior habet inclinationem ad bonum aliquod particulare conveniens inferiori naturae, et repugnans naturae superiori, secundum quam attenditur bonum simpliciter; sicut in homine est inclinatio naturalis ad id quod est conveniens carnali sensui contra bonum rationis.”

30 De sub. sep., cap. 20 [Leon. 40.D77:85-88]: “Possibile . . . est in homine secundum sensibilem et corporalem naturam, in qua cum brutis communicat, esse quandam inclinationem ad furorem, qui est homini malum.”

31 Ibid.

32 SCG III, cap. 126, n. 3 [Leon. 14.389]: “Naturales inclinationes insunt rebus a Deo, qui cuncta movet. Impossibile estigitur quod naturalis inclinatio aliquis speciei sit ad id quod est secundum se malum.”
This coniunctio becomes evil only per accidens and to the extent it is done outside the order of reason. Because man’s nature is “rational animal,” his animal nature becomes evil to the degree it operates in an irrational way. Its disorder is a privation with respect to the order or animality to reason. Individual men may have this “natural inclination to evil” to a greater degree with respect to particular evils: “for instance some men are naturally irascible or lustful owing to their temperament.” But the natural inclination to good remains in man, even in the damned, because “evil is outside of nature.” Nature inclines neither to evil nor falsehood. Virtue is a perfection of nature, vice a corruption. In the proper sense of nature (the nature of any thing considered as form), “whatever is natural to the thing is entirely good and inclines to good.”

St. Thomas’s discussion of the “fomes” (fomes) of sin in ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 confirms that the nature in natural law is the good nature of man in his substantial unity as a rational animal substance. The sensitive inclination, considered in abstraction from man’s whole nature, is ordered to the common good of man as an animal, both as an animal species and as

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33 Cf. In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968] (polygamy is consistent with natural law in the strictest sense, which is what nature teaches all animals, but is against man’s rational nature).
34 De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:182-84]: “potest dici aliquid naturaliter malum, quia est ei naturalis inclinatio ad malum; sicut quidem homines sunt naturaliter iracundi vel concupiscentes propter complexionem.”
35 De ver., q. 16, a. 3, ad 5 [Leon. 22/2.511:104-08]: “malum est praeter naturam.” See also ST I-II, q. 85, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 7.110] (“in damnatis manet naturalis inclinatio ad virtutem”); In II Sent., d. 32, q. 2, a. 3, expos. [Mand. 2.1059] (“quod naturale est malum esse non potest”).
36 In VII Ethic., lect. 13, n. 12 [Leon. 47/2.432:135-7]: “id quod invenitur ut in omnibus aut in pluribus videtur esse ex inclinatione naturae, quae non inclinat neque ad malum neque ad falsum.”
38 In IV Sent., d. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 4, ad 3 [Moos 3.606]: “quidquid in eis est naturale, totum est bonum, et ad bonum inclinans.”
39 Fomes is from Latin, fomes, fomitis, meaning “tinder” or “touchwood.” In English, it means the “morbific matter (of a disease)” or, a figurative sense “any porous substance that is capable of absorbing contagious effluvia,” which can also be used figuratively in a sense similar to Thomas’s, e.g. J. Owen Of Temptation vii. 126 (1658), “Naturall tempers . . . prove a great Fomes of sinne,” cited in OED, s.v. “fomes.”
an individual animal.\textsuperscript{40} This inclination is called the “fomes of sin” (i.e., “sensuality”) only insofar as it “departs from the order of reason.”\textsuperscript{41} The irascible and concupiscible powers are called powers of “sensuality.” These powers “naturally” incline contrary to reason only when “left to themselves,” but within the unity of man’s nature, they “participate” in reason.\textsuperscript{42}

**B. Natura universalis and Natural Evils**

In *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, St. Thomas says the first precept of the natural law is that “good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided.”\textsuperscript{43} Further precepts are specified by man’s threelfold natural inclination. At each level, the *inclinatio hominis* is to something good for man according to nature—e.g., preservation of his own life, procreation of new members of the species, and peaceful life in society. A man has *no* natural inclination, properly speaking, to die, or to kill himself, or to injure others.\textsuperscript{44}

1. *Is Everything That Happens Natural?*

Modern philosophers call into question the seemingly pacific view of nature that underlies St. Thomas’s natural law theory. Their doubts are based on the obvious evils in the “natural world.” Mill, for one, mocks natural teleology as a basis for morality: “If there are any marks at all of special design in creation, one of the things most evidently designed is that a large proportion of all animals should pass their existence in tormenting and devouring

\textsuperscript{40} *ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 6, ad 3 [Leon. 7.158]: “si consideretur inclinatio sensualitatis prout est in aliis animalibus, sic ordinatur ad bonum commune, idest ad conservationem naturae in specie vel in individuo. Et hoc est etiam in homine, prout sensualitas subditur rationi.”

\textsuperscript{41} *ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 6, ad 3 [Leon. 7.158]: “Sed fomes dicitur secundum quod exit rationis ordinem.”

\textsuperscript{42} *De ver.*., q. 25, a. 5, ad 8 [Leon. 22/3.740:163-71]: “sensualitas nominat has vires quantum ad inclinationem naturalem sensui, quae est in contrarium rationi, et non secundum quod participatur rationem.”

\textsuperscript{43} *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “bonum est faciendum et prosequeendum, et malum vitandum.”

\textsuperscript{44} On the contrary, even the commandment to love one’s neighbor is a primary precept of the natural law. *ST* I-II, q. 100, a. 3, ad 1.
other animals.” The human animal is not exempt from nature’s evils. Thus D. A. J. Richards concludes that murder is not unnatural because “many forms of immorality are all too characteristically human.” Even the natural law theorist John Finnis cites a “lack of order” in the natural world as an obstacle to deriving a moral law from nature. This universal, univocal nature, red in tooth and claw, is hardly a fitting substrate for morality.

But those who reject natural teleology as a guide for morality rely on a straw-man understanding of nature. St. Thomas is not at all ignorant of the evils of nature. On the contrary, he calls naturalis many things that, for man or any other animal, are contrary to the nature of the thing of which “natural” is predicated, including corruption, weakness, defect, old age, and death. For example, corruption in the corporeal world is natural, yet it is contrary to the nature of the thing corrupted.48 Even servitude and sin are in certain senses natural. A benign example is tidal motion; it is clearly natural in an ecological sense, despite the natural inclination of water (as a heavy body) to move downwards.49 St. Thomas apparently even holds that everything that happens is natural. He affirms the naturalness of natural evils in terms of causality. The “universal causes” of natural things comprise even the

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45 Mill, On Nature, 30. “They have been lavishly fitted out with the instruments necessary for that purpose; their strongest instincts impel them to it and many of them seem to have been constructed incapable of supporting themselves by any other food.” Ibid.

46 D. A. J. Richards, Liberty and the Constitution, 80.

47 Finnis, Natural Law and Natural Rights, 381. Lest the point be missed, Finnis quotes David Hume’s protagonist approvingly: “Look round this universe. . . . The whole presents nothing but the idea of a blind Nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children!” Ibid., quoting Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, ed., Kemp Smith, 2nd ed. (London, 1947), 174.

48 It is natural for the lion to eat the antelope, but unnatural for the antelope to be eaten. ST I, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 4.265] (the lion would cease to live if there were no slaying of animals). It is natural for animal bodies to “slow down” with age and finally die, but it is also natural for any animal to reach the full perfection of growth, operation, and health in accord with its natural form where there are no material impediments. In II De cael., lect. 9, n. 2 [Leon. 3.153].

49 See, e.g., Comp. theol., lib. 1, cap. 136 [Leon. 42.133:51-52].
defects of natural things.\textsuperscript{50} “[N]atural death and other like defects,” he says, are “evil of nature, not merely from being a privation of the good of nature, but also from being an effect of nature.”\textsuperscript{51} Indeed, because God is the author of the entire universe, “in natural things whatever God does is in a way natural.”\textsuperscript{52}

But if all these things are truly natural, even for St. Thomas, are the critics of teleological natural law not correct after all? If, for example, life and death are both “natural,” then why does the natural law forbid, not command, killing?\textsuperscript{53} Slavery contradicts man’s natural liberty, yet is permissible under the natural law as a punishment for sin.\textsuperscript{54} These examples suggest a contradiction: natural law contra nature. If, for St. Thomas, \textit{natura} and \textit{naturalis} have the same catch-all, univocal senses as the terms “nature” and “natural” do for certain modern thinkers, then his theory of natural law is indeed riven with contradiction, as Mill and others claim.

But clearly St. Thomas does not mean that all of these things are natural in the same sense. The evil things seem to be, in a way, natural and, in a way, \textit{not} natural. Natural death destroys the animal’s bodily nature; the slavery that naturally arises in the fallen world destroys the natural liberty of the individual; sin, to which man in one way has a natural inclination, corrupts the natural inclination to virtue; natural tidal motion moves water

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 93, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 7.166]: “defectus qui accidunt in rebus naturalibus, quamvis sint praeter ordinem causarum particularium, non tamen sunt praeter ordinem causarum universalium.”

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 42, a. 2: “malum naturae, non solum quia privat naturae bonum, sed etiam quia est effectus naturae; sicut mors naturalis, et alii huiusmodi defectus.”

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 7.173]: “in rebus naturalibus quidquid a Deo fit, est quodammodo naturale.”

\textsuperscript{53} The natural law forbids suicide and murder at least in part because of the goodness of animal life. One might also ask, then, why it is permissible under the \textit{natural} law for a man to kill non-human animals for food or for the state in certain instances to kill human beings. Kevin Flannery argues that “[a]ny sort of killing (even killing of animals) would . . . be against the ‘first intention’ of natural law.” Flannery, “Law of Survival,” 18 n. 29.

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 5 and ad 3 [Leon. 7.172-3] (slavery and private property are additions to the natural law “ad utilitatem humanae vitae”).
upwards away from its natural place as a heavy body. How then are these things both natural and unnatural?


The answer to this question lies in a crucial distinction St. Thomas draws between two senses of *natura*:

Death and other defects of nature are the effects of the universal nature; and yet the particular nature rebels against them as far as it can. Accordingly, from the inclination of the particular nature arise pain and sorrow for such like evils, when present; fear when threatening in the future.\(^{55}\)

The distinction between universal nature and particular nature shows why, for St. Thomas, nature (proper sense) is not simply “everything that happens” and what is “natural” or “according to nature” (proper sense) is distinct from what is natural in the sense of universal nature. Arguably much of the confusion about nature in modern philosophy and, to an extent, in the contemporary debates about natural law, can be traced to a failure to make this distinction.

St. Thomas explains this distinction in terms of different orders of causality. Particular causes and effects correspond to particular nature, while the entire order of causes in the universe corresponds to universal nature.\(^{56}\)


\(^{56}\) See De ver., q. 13, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 22/2.417-18:193-96]: “duplex est natura; scilicet particularis, quae est propria unicique rei, et universalis, quae complectitur totum ordinem causarum naturalium.” The genus animal is, at the same time, *universalis* with respect to man and *particularis* with respect to substance. De pot., q. 6, a. 1, ad 1 [Marietti 160]: “Nihil enim prohibet unam et eamdem causam esse universalem respectu inferiorum et particularum respectu superiorum, sicut et in praedicabilia accidit; nam animal, quod est universale respectu hominis, est particularare respectu substantiae.” Rarely, *natura universalis* refers to an
nature—not individual nature. Particular natures are the many natures in the created order, considered severally, whose multiplicity St. Thomas (following Aristotle) takes to be obvious. Examples of \textit{natura particularis} include the nature of stone, fire, water, horse, eye, and man. Examples of particular causes and effects include the motion of a heavy thing downwards according to its form and end and the growth of a lion according to its substantial form. The particular nature “intends the conservation of its proper subject.” By contrast, deficiencies (\textit{defectus}) found in natural things are “outside the order of particular causes, [but] they are not outside the order of universal causes . . .” Whatever God does in creatures is “natural without qualification” (\textit{simpliciter naturale}) in terms of universal nature,
even if some things God does are against the “proper and particular nature” of a thing.\(^{62}\)

The good of the universe requires things that are evil for the particular nature, such as corruption.

Corresponding to these two meanings of *natura*, Aquinas says that something can be either according to nature or against nature in two modes.\(^ {63}\) Death, corruption, defect, old age (*senium*), impotence (*impotentia*), decrease (*decrementum*), diminution, punishment (*poena*), violent motion, and “monsters” (*monstra*) are all in accord with universal nature but are against (*contra*) or outside (*praeter*) the particular nature of the thing that suffers from such effects.\(^ {64}\) Likewise, sin and its effects are in a way natural (according to universal nature) and in a way unnatural (according to particular nature of man).\(^ {65}\)

In terms of matter and form, the natural inclination of the body as matter is natural according to universal nature, whereas the natural inclination of man understood as form is

\(^{62}\) *In Rom.*, cap. 11, lect. 3, n. 910 [Marietti, 169]: “quicquid Deus facit in creatura, est simpliciter naturale, licet forte non sit naturale secundum propriam et particularem naturam rei in qua fit.”

\(^{63}\) See *De ver.*, q. 13, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 22/2.4.17-18;193-96]. See also *In V Phys.*, lect. 10, n. 3 [Leon. 2.263-4]: “Si . . . consideretur propria natura alicuius rei, quae dicitur natura particularis, manifestum est quod omnis corporio et defectus et decrementum est contra naturam: quia unusquisque natura intendit conservationem proprii subiecti; contrarium autem accidit ex defecto seu debilitate naturae. Si autem consideretur natura in universali, tunc omnia huismodi proveniunt ex aliquo principio naturali intrinseco, sicut corporio animalis ex contrarietate calidi et frigidi; et eadem ratio est in aliis.”

\(^{64}\) *De ver.*, q. 13, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 22/2.418:200] (“omnis corporio et defectus et senium”); *In V Phys.*, lect. 10, n. 3 [Leon. 2.263-4] (old age, corruption, decrease); *ST* I, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 4.265] (corruption and defect); *ST* I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116] (death and corruption); *In II De cael.*, lect. 9, n. 2 [Leon. 3.153] (all impotence and defect); *De pot.*, q. 6, a. 1, ad 1 [Marietti 159-60] (corruption, old age, defects); *SCG* III, cap. 94, n. 10 [Leon. 14.289] (corruption, decrease, and every defect); *De pot.*, q. 6, a. 2, ad 8 [Marietti 163] (monsters); *In De div. nom.*, cap. 4, lect. 21, n. 552 [Marietti 206] (moving down contrary to particular nature of fire); *De malo*, q. 3, a. 1, ad 3 (punishment) [Leon. 23.67:190-202]; *In Rom.*, cap. 8, lect. 4, n. 671 [Marietti, 121] (“inquantum defectus creaturae sensibilis sunt contra naturalem appetitum particularis naturae, dicitur ipsa creatura sensibilis ingemiscere”).

\(^{65}\) Leo J. Elders, *The Ethics of Thomas Aquinas: Happiness, Natural Law and the Virtues* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 191: “If one considers the essential nature of things, their corruption is against their being which is ordered to self-preservation. But seen in the context of the world as a whole (*natura universalis*) the corruption of things makes sense…. [Death is] in agreement with the material principle in [living things] which must be determined now by this and then by another form. Their formal principle, on the other hand, is ordered to building up their being and to preserve it, even if it cannot attain this permanently because of its union with matter.” Ibid.
natural according to particular nature. The natural inclination of matter comes from the universal agent. But St. Thomas, following Aristotle, says that form is “more nature (magis natura) than matter” and that which is according to form is “more natural” (naturalius) than that which is according to matter. Particular nature is the formal principle of motion in a determinate thing. As the active power (virtus activa) of any thing, the particular nature “tends to preserve the subject in which it exists.” The inclination of a particular nature is the inclination of the nature proper to a given kind of thing. For example, in the case of man, pain and sorrow arise from the inclination of nature in the presence of death and defect.

This inclination of particular nature is, in other words, the inclination of form.

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66 See ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116]: “de unaquaque re corruptibili dupliciter loqui possumus, uno modo, secundum naturam universalem; alio modo, secundum naturam particularem. Natura quidem particularis est propria virtus activa et conservativa uniuscuiusque rei. Et secundum hanc, omnis corruptio et defectus est contra naturam, ut dicitur in II de caelo, quia huiusmodi virtus intendit esse et conservationem eius cuius est. Natura vero universalis est virtus activa in aliqvo universali principio naturae, puta in aliquo caelestium corporum; vel alcuinu superioris substantiae, secundum quod etiam Deus a quibusdam dicitur natura naturans. Quae quidem virtus intendit bonum et conservationem universi, ad quod exigitur alternatio generationis et corruptionis in rebus. Et secundum hoc, corruptiones et defectus rerum sunt naturales, non quidem secundum inclinationem formae, quae est principium essendi et perfectionis; sed secundum inclinationem materiae, quae proportionaliter attribuitur tali formae secundum distributionen universalis agentis. Et quamvis omnis forma intendent perpetuum esse quantum potest, nulla tamen forma rei corruptibilis potest assequi perpetuitatem sui, praeter animam rationalem, eo quod ipsa non est subiecta omnino materiae corporali, sicut aliae formae; quinimmo habet propriam operationem immateriallem, ut in primo habitum est. Unde ex parte suae formae, naturalior est homini incorruptio quam aliis rebus corruptibilibus. Sed quia et ipsa habet materiam ex contrariis compositam, ex inclinatione materiae sequitur corruptibilitas in toto. Et secundum hoc, homo est naturaliter corruptibilis secundum naturam materiae sibi relictae, sed non secundum naturam formae.” Cf. De malo, q. 5, a. 5 [Leon. 23.141:226-29]: “corruptionem senium et omnis defectus sunt contra naturam particularum huius rei determinatae per formam, quamvis sint secundum naturam universalem, cuius virtute reductur materia in actu cuislibet formae ad quam est in potentia, et uno generato necesse est aliud corrupi.”

67 ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116] (inclination of matter is from universal agent).


69 In De div. nom., cap. 4, lect. 21, n. 552 [Marietti 206].

70 ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116] (“Natura quidem particularis est propria virtus activa et conservativa uniuscuiusque rei”); In V Phys., lect. 10, n. 3 [Leon. 2.263-4] (“natura particularis . . . intendit conservationem propii subiecti; contrarium autem accidit ex defectu seu debilitate naturae”).

71 ST I-II, q. 42, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 6.277]: “mors et aliis defectus naturae proveniunt a natura universali, quibus tamen repugnat natura particularis quantum potest. Et sic ex inclinatione particularis naturae, est dolor et tristitia de huiusmodi malis, cum sunt praesentia; et timor, si immineant in futurum.”

72 Universal nature’s inclination is that of matter. ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116]: “corruptiones et defectus rerum sunt naturales, non quidem secundum inclinationem formae, quae est principium essendi et
3. Human Nature as Particular Nature

With respect to man, *natura particularis* refers to form.73 Because a thing’s particular nature is “its own power of action and self-preservation,” and man’s particular nature is the rational soul, incorruption is “more natural” to man than corruption of the body “left to itself” (*sibi relicta*).74 Death is not natural to man as form, because form strives for self-perpetuation. But in terms of universal nature, death, old age, and corruption are natural to man inasmuch as his body is, by its material nature, mutable.75 Although nature is both form and matter, corruption follows only “from the necessity of matter.”76 Universal nature is an intrinsic principle of the destruction of an animal in the sense that the contraries inherent in matter (e.g., hot and cold) cause the animal’s corruption.77 Universal nature “intends the good and the preservation of the universe, for which alternate generation and corruption in things are requisite.”78 Bodily death is in this way natural to man.

The distinction between *natura particularis* and *natura universalis* partly accounts for how St. Thomas can acknowledge the naturalness of nature’s evils and cruelties while perfectionis; sed secundum inclinationem materiae, quae proportionaliter attribuitur tali formae secundum distributionem universalis agentis.”73 Jesus assumes “human particular nature”—not that of some other kind of creature. *In III Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 1, qc. 1 (“nulla natura particularis assumi potuisse, per quam ita universum perfici posset sicut per assumptionem humanae naturae”); *In III Sent.*, d. 6, q. 1, a. 1, qc. 3, ad 1 (“Damascenus intendit dicere, quod assumpsit humanam naturam particularum, non autem subsistentem, sed quod in ea divina persona subsistit.”).74 ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116]. See ibid.: “omnis forma intendat perpetuum esse quantum potest,” but only the form of the rational soul “potest assequi perpetuitatem sui.”75 See, e.g., *In Rom.*, cap. 8, lect. 4, n. 664 [Marietti, 121]: “Huiusmodi enim defectus, qui consequuntur mutabilitatem, sicut corruptio et senium et alia huiusmodi, sunt contra naturam particularum huius vel illius rei, cuius appetitus est ad conservationem, licet sint secundum naturam universalem.”76 *De malo*, q. 5, a. 5 [Leon. 23.141:173-74]: “ex necessitate materia.” See also *In II De cael.*, lect. 9, n. 2 [Leon. 3.153]. Cf. Aristotle, *Phys.* II.9.77 *In V Phys.*, lect. 10, n. 3 [Leon. 2.34]: “Si . . . consideretur natura in universali, tunc omnia huiusmodi proveniunt ex aliquo principio naturali intrinsico, sicut corruptio animalis ex contrarietate calidi et frigidi . . . .” Material bodies, riven with contraries, inevitably succumb to corruption. *De ver.*, q. 13, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 22/2.418:200-4].78 ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116].
nevertheless taking human nature (form) as a basis for morality. Human nature, properly speaking, does provide a basis for natural law, even as the evils of nature in a larger sense (though they provide for the perfection of the universe) may conflict with the good of man’s particular nature.

4. Particular Nature and Natural Law

In one way, particular nature corresponds to nature in the sense underlying St. Thomas’s notion of natural law. The “natural” for man, properly speaking, is whatever is suitable to man according to his form. But universal nature is not limited to evil things; it comprises the “whole order of natural causes,” which includes “all particular causes.” For example, universal nature comprises not only corruption, but also generation, because both are necessary for the good and perfection of the universe. The natural inclination to the union of male and female thus lies at the nexus of universal and particular nature.

Universal nature is also the cause of the particular nature itself by way of an “impression” (impressio). St. Thomas notes that “every motion which happens in the inferior nature from the impression of a superior, whether in corporeal things or spiritual things, is somehow natural according to universal nature, but not always according to particular nature.” The impression is natural to the particular nature “only when the impression is imprinted in the inferior nature by the superior nature in such a way that the very impression

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79 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.170]: “Inclinatur ... unumquodque naturaliter ad operationem sibi convenientem secundum suam formam, sicut ignis ad calefaciendum. Unde cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis, naturalis inclinatio inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem. Et hoc est agere secundum virtutem.”

80 De ver., q. 13, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 22/2.418:196] (“totum ordinem causarum naturalium”); ST I, q. 22, a. 2, ad 1 [Leon. 4.265] (“omnes causae particulares concludantur sub universali causa”).

81 ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116].
is its nature.

This *impressio* which “is its nature” is the *impressio* St. Thomas describes in his discussion of the eternal law. Also, he explains Gratian’s definition of *ius naturale* as “what is contained in the law and the gospel” in terms of the “impression of a higher principle” on man. Such impression, as explained above, is the “overlap” of universal nature and the particular nature of man, not universal nature in any sense contrary to the particular nature of man.

C. Fallen Nature

The notion of universal nature accounts for many of the “natural” imperfections that are necessary for the perfection of the universe. What, then, is “fallen nature”? Is it, at bottom, another merely natural imperfection? Is the “nature” in natural inclination the fallen nature of man or is it an underlying or ideal nature uncorrupted by sin? In other words, is the very “fallenness” of nature now nature itself? In his commentary on the the scriptural teaching that “death through sin” entered the world, St. Thomas seems to equate nature with fallenness:

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82 *De ver.*, q. 13, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 22/2.418:206-13]: “omnis motus qui fit in inferiori natura ex impressione superioris, sive in corporalibus sive in spiritualibus, est quidem naturalis secundum naturam universalem, non autem semper secundum naturam partihcularem; nisi quando a natura superiori sic imprimitur in naturam inferiorem, ut ipsa impressio sit eius natura.” See also *In IV Sent.*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968] (“impresio et infusione superioris principii, scilicet Dei.”

83 All things participate in the eternal law “inquantum . . . ex impressione eius habent inclinationes in proprios actus et fines.” *ST I-II*, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154]. See *ST I-II*, q. 93, a. 5, ad 1 [Leon. 7.166]: “hoc modo se habet impressio activi principii intrinseci, quantum ad res naturales, sicut se habet promulgatio legis quantum ad homines, quia per legis promulgationem imprimitur hominibus quoddam directivum principii humanorum actuum . . .” Natural law, in turn, is the rational creature’s participation in the eternal law because “quasi lumen rationis naturalis, quo discernimus quid sit bonum et malum, quod pertinet ad naturalem legem, nihil aliud sit quam impressio divini luminis in nobis.” Because the divine causation of the particular nature’s inclinations is not a univocal-mechanical agency, it is ridiculous to say that the motion of the heart is from “some universal nature” outside the creature. *De motu cordis* [Leon. 43.127:25-26]: “ab aliqua natura universali.”

84 *In IV Sent.*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968]: “ea quae sunt de jure divino, dicuntur esse de jure naturali, cum sint ex impressione et infusione superioris principii, scilicet Dei; et sic accipitur ab [Gratiani], qui dicit, quod jus naturale est quod in lege et in Evangelio continetur.”

The human body is composed of contraries; whence it is naturally corruptible. It is said however that human nature can be considered in two ways: in one way according to its intrinsic principles, and then death is natural. Hence Seneca says that death is natural not penal for man. In another way man’s nature can be considered in the light of what divine providence had supplied it through original justice. This justice was a state in which man’s mind was under God, the lower powers of the soul under the mind, the body under the soul, and all external things under man, with the result that as long as man’s mind remained under God, the lower powers would remain subject to reason, and the body to the soul by receiving life from it without interruption, and external things to man in the sense that all things would serve man, who would never experience any harm from them.  

Is nature (proper sense) the same as fallen nature? If these questions are rejected as inadmissible intrusions of theology (proceeding on premises known only by revelation), the modern scholar may easily misconstrue what St. Thomas means by “nature” and “natural law.”

1. Modern Nature as Fallen Nature

From the standpoint of univocal modern nature, everything in the observable world is natural, whether good or evil. Putting theological speculations aside, the natural world apparently comprises many evils, including not only biological death and corruption, but also human sin and selfishness. As C. S. Lewis explains, “nature is fallen and so the very word nature (though she was created good and right) now means the weakness of fallen nature.”

For example, in modern nature, man’s cruelty towards other men is no less natural than animal predation. Among human “natural inclinations,” Mill includes the “hateful

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86 In Rom., cap. 5, lect. 3, n. 416 [Marietti, 75]: “Est enim corpus humanum ex contrariis compositum. Unde est naturaliter corruptibile. Dicendum est autem quod natura humana dupliciter potest considerari. Uno modo secundum principia intrinsea, et sic mors est ei naturalis. Unde Seneca dicit in libro de remediis fortuitorum, quod mors natura est hominis, non poena. Alio modo potest considerari natura hominis secundum quod per divinam providentiam fuit ei per iustitiam originalem provisum. Quae quidem iustitia erat quaedam rectitudo, ut mens hominis esset sub Deo, et inferiores vires essent sub mente, et corpus sub anima, et omnia exteriora sub homine: ita scilicet, quod quamdui mens hominis Deo subderetur, vires inferiores subderentur rationi, et corpus animae, indeficienter ab ea vitam recipiens, et exteriora homini, ut scilicet omnia servirent, et nullum ex eis nocementum sentiret.”

87 C. S. Lewis, Studies in Words, 54.
propensity” to be “naturally cruel.”

If nature includes sin and the evil propensities of men, natural law theory errs in supposing that man’s natural inclinations supply a moral compass. As C. S. Lewis explains, “what Aquinas or Hooker would call ‘the law of Nature’ now becomes in its turn the convention; it is something artificially imposed, in opposition to the true law of nature, the way we all spontaneously behave if we dare (or don’t interfere with ourselves), the way all the other creatures behave, the way that comes ‘naturally’ to us.” In this univocal understanding of nature, there can be no natural law except certain modern varieties of natural law that are “deduced from how men actually live.” The radically corrupt nature of Luther becomes simply nature. The wounds of *natura vulnerata* are no longer recognized as wounds to be healed. Like Mill, Hobbes mistakes the very fallenness of man for human nature itself but, unlike Mill, he attempts to construct a new natural law on the lower but surer foundation of fallen nature. As Lewis explains, Hobbes’s natural law focuses on “those motives and modes of behavior which are least specifically human.” The foremost “law of nature, thus conceived, is self-preservation and self-aggrandizement, pursued by whatever trickeries or cruelties may prove to be advisable.” Other modern natural law theorists aim higher than Hobbes, but view nature in similar terms. In the new natural law theory of John Finnis and his followers, it seems that reason is no longer the servant of base nature (as for Hobbes) but instead overmasters base nature, transforming it in to the gold of morality.

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88 J. S. Mill, *On Nature*, 29. Southern Europeans take “a real pleasure in inflicting, or seeing the infliction of pain. . . . [T]his is not one of the natural inclinations which it would be wrong to suppress.” Ibid.
90 Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 180.
92 Ibid.
Finnis states that, although human inclinations to selfishness and cruelty do not necessarily correspond to “basic values,” it is not necessary to determine which inclinations are “more natural” than others. 93 Similarly, Wolfgang Kluxen notes that the fallenness of “concrete, actual nature” is a punishment for original sin, but seems to take such actual nature for nature as such; for Kluxen, if man’s natural tendencies include those toward “the base and ignoble,” then “nature is not an immediate measure and norm.” 94 By contrast, for St. Thomas, nature in the proper sense is distinguished from its failures.

2. Original Sin and “Corrupt Nature”

The relationship between nature’s inherent goodness and original sin is complicated by the fact that St. Thomas in some places associates the corruption of original sin with natural inclination:

[T]he sort of corruption by which the parts of the soul are said to be corrupt in some sense follows the inclination of nature. The gift bestowed upon man in his first state, as a result of which reason kept the lower powers entirely in check, and the soul kept in check the body, was not from the efficacy of any natural principles but from the efficacy of original justice . . . . When this justice was removed by sin, man returned to a state which befitted him according to his own natural principles. 95

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93 Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, 91. “There is no need to consider whether these urges are more, or less, ‘natural’ (in terms of frequency, universality, intensity, etc.) . . . .”

94 Wolfgang Kluxen, “Lex naturae: The Lasting Significance of the Thomistic Solution to the Problem of Ethics,” in *Nature in Medieval Thought: Some Approaches East and West*, ed. Chumaru Koyama (Boston: Brill, 2000), 107. Nature becomes a norm “only once it is understood as a structured order, in which reason itself belongs as the decisive instance of this order. Only reason and what is understood by reason, the rational good, is fit to be the content of a prescription. Thus, Thomas need not worry about the objection that in actual, concrete nature there exist natural tendencies toward evil, proclivities toward the base and ignoble; he recognized this under the name of the lex fomitis or the lex peccati . . . . So, the natural law turns into the rational law in terms of its content: that according to which human beings must direct themselves is always the ordo rationis.” Ibid., 107-8.

95 De ver., q. 25, a. 7 [Leon. 22/3.743:58-67]: “Huiusmodi autem corruptio qua partes animae dicuntur corruptae, sequitur quodammodo inclinationem naturae. Quod enim homini in primo statu collatum fuit ut ratio totaliter inferiores vires contineret, et anima corpus, non fuit ex virtute principiorum naturalium, sed ex virtute originalis iustitiae . . . . Qua quidem iustitia per peccatum sublata, homo redit ad statum convenientem sibi per principia sua naturalia.”
As St. Thomas signals, this corruption follows the inclination of nature only “in some sense.” But man’s nature, in the full and proper sense, is rational-animal-substance.

a. Two states of nature

For St. Thomas, properly speaking, there are two conditions or states of nature, not different natures. St. Thomas distinguishes between human nature in the state of integral nature and the fallen human nature, but in the case of fallen nature the fallenness is not itself the nature. Human nature, properly speaking, is integral nature:

We may speak of man in two ways: first, in the state of integral nature; secondly, in the state of corrupted nature. Now in the state of integral nature, man, without habitual grace, could avoid sinning either mortally or venially; since to sin is nothing else than to stray from [recedere ab] what is according to our nature, which man could have avoided in the state of integral nature.96

Note that original sin results in a straying from man’s “integral” nature. In terms of man’s natural inclination described in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, original sin results in man, as a substance, no longer being able to remain in being perpetually. The gift of original justice prevents man’s naturally corruptible body from dying: “every form intends perpetual being as far as it can, yet no form of a corruptible being can achieve its own perpetuity.”97

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96 ST III, q. 61 a. 2 ad 2 [Leon. 12.15]: “eadem est natura hominis ante peccatum et post peccatum, non tamen est idem naturae status.”

97 ST I-II, q. 109, a. 8: “de homine dupliciter loqui possimus, uno modo, secundum statum naturae integrae; alio modo, secundum statum naturae corruptae. Secundum statum quidem naturae integrae, etiam sine gratia habituali, poterat homo non peccare nec mortaliter nec venialiter, quia peccare nihil aliud est quam recedere ab eo quod est secundum naturam, quod vitare homo poterat in integritate naturae.” Cf. ST I-II, q. 109, a. 2 (“natura hominis dupliciter potest considerari, uno modo, in sui integritate, sicut fuit in primo parente ante peccatum; alio modo, secundum quod est corrupta in nobis post peccatum primi parentis”); De malo, q. 3 a. 1 ad 9 [Leon. 23.68:244-48] (“aliter loquendum est de homine secundum statum naturae conditae, et aliter secundum statum naturae corruptae, quia, secundum statum naturae conditae, homo nihil habebat impellens ad malum . . . sed in statu naturae corruptae habet impellens ad malum”). N.b.: Natura integralis (nature without sin) is not the same as natura pura (the hypothetical state of nature without the gift of grace).

98 ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116]: “omnis forma intendet perpetuum esse quantum potest, nulla tamen forma rei corruptibilis potest assequi perpetuitatem sui.”
justice, the nature of man’s body is “left to itself.” Likewise, man’s fallen animal nature, outside the order of reason, inclines to whatever is pleasurable for the body without regard of the good of the whole man. At the same time, man’s rational nature is clouded and turns itself towards pride or allows itself to become the slave of the passions.

b. Nature wounded but not destroyed

“Corrupt” and “corruption” are strong words. In St. Thomas’s Latin, corruptio can mean the contrary of generation, in which case it means the destruction of the corrupted thing as a substantial nature. As we shall see, however, natura corrupta for St. Thomas does not mean the total destruction of human nature. In English, “corrupt” has a range of meanings. Although the word usually does not suggest total destruction, it can, especially in classical protestant theology, suggest irreparable damage: to say that man’s nature, after the Fall, is corrupt is to say it is fatally wounded, vitiated, depraved. St. Thomas, however, does not mean that fallen human nature is corrupt to the point of being destroyed or transformed into something evil at its root. Rather, St. Thomas adheres to St. Augustine’s distinction between wounded nature (natura vulnerata) and integral nature. The woundedness of nature is not nature itself. Original sin is a “disease of nature” (languor naturae).

It sometimes describes it as a second nature or quasi-nature, by which he simply means a habit which

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100 See, e.g., De ver., q. 5, a. 2, ad 6 [Leon. 22/1.144:235-36]: “ipsa rei annihilatio dicitur corruptio.” Schütz gives “Zerstörung . . . [im Gegensatz] zu generatio” as the first definition of corruptio.

supervenes upon nature.102

What effect does original sin have on man’s natural inclination, in the proper sense of the term? In terms of man’s specific, rational nature, his natural inclination to the good remains: “that thing that is by nature, is not destroyed through sin. But inclination to good is natural to man, as is said, which is according to the spark of reason. Ergo the spark of reason is not extinguished by sin.”103 St. Thomas considers whether the natural inclination to virtue remains in fallen man. In answer, he explains that there are three goods of nature: original justice, the natural inclination to virtue, and the constitutive principles of nature. Original sin, on one hand, destroys the original justice but, on the other hand, neither diminishes nor destroys the principles of nature (nor the properties of the nature, such as the powers of the soul). As for the natural inclination, it is merely diminished, not destroyed.104 Even in the worst sinner, the natural inclination to act in accordance with the eternal law remains.105 In any event, St. Thomas makes clear that original sin’s effects are contrary to human nature properly speaking: “Concupiscence . . . through which the concupiscible power is prone to be borne into the perceived delectable thing beyond the order of reason, is against the nature of

102 See, e.g., De ver., q. 24, a. 10, ad 5 [Leon. 22/3.707]: “peccatum sit menti rationali quasi naturale effectum, illa necessitas non erit coactionis, sed quasi naturalis inclinationis.”
103 In II Sent., d. 39, q. 3, a. 1, s.c. 2 [Mand. 2.995]: “illud quod est naturale, per peccatum non tollitur. Sed inclination ad bonum est homini naturalis, ut dictum est, quae est secundum rationis scintillam. Ergo scintilla rationis per peccatum non extinguitur.”
104 ST I-II, q. 85, a. 1 (“Oportet autem quod ex hoc quod aliquid inclinatur ad unum contrarium, diminuat inclination eis ad alium. Unde cum peccatum sit contrarium virtuti, ex hoc ipso quod homo peccat, diminuitur bonum naturae quod est inclination ad virtutem”); ST I-II q. 85, a. 1, ad 2 (“natura, etsi sit prior quam voluntaria actio, tamen habet inclinationem ad quandam voluntaria actionem. Unde ipsa natura secundum se non variatur propter variationem voluntariae actionis, sed ipsa inclination variatur ex illa parte qua ordinatur ad terminum”). The natural inclination to virtue is diminished further by actual sin. ST I-II, q. 85, a. 3: “inclinatio ad bonum virtutis in unoquaque diminuitur per peccatum actuale.” See Cohen, “Evil Inclination,” 509-510.
105 ST I-II, q. 93, a. 6, ad 2 [Leon. 7.166-7]: “in nullo homine ita prudentia carnis dominatur, quod totum bonum naturae corrumpatur. Et ideo remanet in homine inclination ad agendum ea quae sunt legis aeternae.”
man insofar as he is man, and thus pertains to original sin.”

D. Natural Inclinations Distinguished From Sinful and Vicious Inclinations

Certain modern philosophers assume that man’s natural inclinations include his sinful inclinations. As noted in Chapter I, for Mill or Kant, natural inclination is a bad inclination. In their view, the point of morality is to restrain or oppose natural inclination, not to follow it. For St. Thomas, however, nature is good and, accordingly, natural inclination is naturally “right” (recta); indeed, “to say that natural inclination is not right, is to derogate from the author of nature.” Yet St. Thomas was certainly aware that, in the “real world,” individual men have many and varied evil inclinations. In many texts, he speaks of a natural inclination to evil, sin, or vice in a qualified sense. Indeed, he seems to say that the common lot of

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106 De malo, q. 4, a. 2, ad 4 [Leon. 23.111:323-27]; “Concupiscensia . . . per quam prona est vis concupiscibilis ut feratur in delectabile sensus praeter ordinem rationis, est contra naturam hominis in quantum est homo, et ita pertinet ad peccatum originale.”

107 ST I, q. 60, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.98]: “Dicere . . . inclination naturalis non sit recta, est derogare auctori naturae.”

108 De ver., q. 24, a. 10, ad 1 [Leon. 22/3.707:357-59] (the sinner also takes on a “second nature” that inclines towards evil: “quando homo de virtute in vitium transit, fit quasi alius, eo quod quasi in aliam naturam transit”); De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:236-38] (there is in man “inclinatio naturalis ad id quod est conveniens carnali sensui contra bonum rationis”); ST II-II, q. 136, a. 3, ad 1 [Leon. 10.102] (“in natura corrupta praevalit inclinatio concupiscientiae, quae in homine dominatur”); In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968] (adultery, fornication, and polygamy are natural to man’s generic nature); ST I-II, q. 94, a. 4 [Leon. 7.172], citing Caes. De bel. gal. vi (an entire nation can have inclinations to certain sins, such as theft, “ex mala habitudine naturae”); ST I-II, q. 46, a. 5 (revenge “is more natural than meekness” and man has a natural inclination to “repress” those who rise up against him—by whatever means); In Eph., cap. 2, lect. 2, n. 83 [Marietti, 2.23], quoting Eph. 2:3 (the Jews are “by nature children of wrath,” natura filii irae, from their “natural origin”); In VI Ethic., lect. 11, n. 2 [Leon. 47/2.376:35-43] (“mores virtutum vel vitiorum videntur aliqualiter existere aliisque hominibus naturaliter”); In IV Ethic., lect. 11, n. 7 [Leon. 47/2.238:86-88] (these natural vices are opposed to virtue; and virtue’s chief purpose is “ut reprimantur humanae inclinationes ad malum”); In II Ethic., lect. 11, n. 8 [Leon. 47/1.115:84-100] (a crowd of men usually follows its own natural inclinations to the extent the men succumb to the passions of the group; in attempting to acquire virtues, man “strives” [nitatur] to the contrary of that to which he is inclined by nature). Cf. De malo, q. 4, a. 2, ad 19 [Leon. 23.113:479-80] (“cum peccatum origine sit peccatum naturae”); In II Sent., d. 37, q. 1, a. 1 (personal sin “potest dici natura peccatum” in Boethius’s sense of nature as any intelligible thing).
To understand what St. Thomas means by natural inclination in relation to sin and vice, it is necessary to draw two distinctions. First, as discussed in previous chapters, he uses the terms “nature” and “natural” in different senses. In the sense proper to nature as form, sin is contrary to natural inclination. It is only in the secondary sense of nature as body that St. Thomas says, with precise qualifications, that man can have a natural inclination to evil, sin, or vice. Second, not all inclinations are natural inclinations. As explained below, only inclinations of the higher appetites can be truly sinful or vicious.

1. Natural inclinations to evil, sin, and vice?

The texts in which St. Thomas speaks of a natural inclination to evil, sin, or vice seem to contradict his insistence that natural inclination is only to the good. But the context of these cases shows that, by “natural,” he does not mean nature in the sense of form; instead, he means one of two things: (1) according to the bodily complexion of an individual; or (2) according to man’s composite nature inasmuch as the inclination of his bodily nature is at odds with reason. He discusses the potentially evil inclinations of man’s bodily nature in both of these senses in the context of the question of whether demons are naturally evil. He observes that something can be naturally evil “because it has a natural inclination to evil; for instance some men are naturally irascible or lustful owing to their temperament.”

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109 De ver., q. 5, a. 10, ad 7 [Leon. 22/1.171:241-45]: “multitudo ut in pluribus sequitur inclinationes naturales, inquantum homines multitudinis acquiescunt passionibus; sed sapientes ratione superant passiones et inclinationes.”

110 De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:183-85]: “potest dici aliquid naturaliter malum, quia est ei naturalis inclinationi ad malum; sicut quidam homines sunt naturaliter iracundi vel concupiscientes propter complexionem.”
Demons, St. Thomas concludes, cannot have a natural inclination to evil because,

“if they are intellectual substances, there cannot be a natural inclination to evil simply

because the inclination of any nature is to what is similar to itself and consequently to that

which is good and befitting to it.”\textsuperscript{111} In man, by contrast, there is a natural inclination to evil

inasmuch as his composite nature conflicts with his reason:

\begin{quote}
Anything that has a natural inclination to evil simply is a composite of two natures, the

lower of which has an inclination to some particular good pleasing to it but contrary to the

higher nature according to which good itself is taken into account. For example in man there

is a natural inclination to that which is agreeable to carnal sense contrary to the good of

reason.\textsuperscript{112}
\end{quote}

In this qualified sense, there is a natural inclination to malice, wrath, and lust on the part of

sensitive nature in general.\textsuperscript{113} There can be a natural inclination to vice (or virtue) in an

individual “according to the disposition of sensitive part.”\textsuperscript{114} In the same sense, man is

naturally inclined to bodily pleasures.\textsuperscript{115}

Similarly, describing what seems to be dueling natural inclinations within man, he

contrasts the innate habit of the lower part of the soul inclining to evil with the natural

inclination of man’s reason:

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{111} De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:224-28]: “daemonibus, si sunt substantiae intellectuales,

inclinatio naturalis ad malum simpliciter inesse non potest: quia inclinatio cuiuslibet naturae est in sibi simile, et

per consequens in id quod est sibi conveniens et bonum.”

\footnote{112} De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:230-38]: “cuicumque inest naturalis inclinatio ad malum

simpliciter, hoc sit compositum ex duabus naturis, quarum inferior habet inclinationem ad bonum aliquid

particulare conveniens inferiori naturae, et repugnans naturae superiori, secundum quam attenditur bonum

simpliciter; sicut in homine est inclinatio naturalis ad id quod est conveniens carnali sensui contra bonum

rationis.”

\footnote{113} See ST I, q. 63, a. 4, ad 2 [Leon. 5.129]: “malitia aliquor hominum potest dici naturalis . . .

propter naturalem inclinationem ex parte naturae sensitivae, ad aliquam inordinatam passionem, sicut quidam

dicuntur naturaliter iracundi vel concupiscentes; non autem ex parte naturae intellectualis.”

\footnote{114} De virt. comm., a. 9, ad 22 [Marietti 733]: “secundum hanc dispositionem quae est in parte

sensitiva, dicuntur aliqui habere naturalem inclinationem ad vitium vel virtutem etc.”

\footnote{115} In II Ethic., lect. 11, n. 9 [Leon. 47/1.115:110-115]: “Omnes . . . naturaliter inclinantur ad

delectationes . . . [H]omo maxime inclinatur in delectionem, delectabilia apprehensa de facili movent

appetitum.”
\end{footnotes}
The innate habit which inclines to evil belongs to the lower part of the soul, by which it is joined to the body. But the habit which naturally inclines to good belongs to the higher part of the soul. Therefore, these two opposite habits do not belong to the same thing in the same way.\footnote{116} This statement is a response to the objection that the fomes of sin, which always incline to evil, are innate.\footnote{117}

It must be emphasized that man has one substantial nature, not several. His composite nature is at the same time bodily, animal, and rational, but it is pre-eminently rational. Man’s rational nature is not itself inclined to evil. The will, considered as a power, is naturally inclined only to good. If the will chooses evil, the cause is not nature. Rather, such evil inclination is due to ignorance or to the “impulse [impulsum] of the sensitive appetite, as when anyone sins through passion.”\footnote{118} The will may also sin out of malice through a corrupt disposition inclining to evil, so that, in respect of that disposition, some evil is, as it were, suitable and similar to him; and to this thing, by reason of its suitableness, the will tends, as to something good, because everything tends, of its own accord, to that which is suitable to it.\footnote{119}

In some cases, this corrupt disposition is caused by a “sickly condition on the part of the body, as in the case of a man who is naturally inclined to certain sins, by reason of some natural corruption in himself.”\footnote{120} This text suggests a third sense of “natural inclination” that is not necessarily from birth but may come about due to corruption of one’s given bodily

\footnote{116} \textit{De ver.}, q. 16, a. 1, ad 11 [Leon. 22/2.506:357-63]: “habitum ille inclinans ad malum innatus pertinet ad inferiorem partem animae, qua corpori coniungitur; habitus vero naturaliter inclinans ad bonum pertinet ad superiorem partem. Et ideo hi duo contrarii habitus non sunt eiusdem secundum idem.”

\footnote{117} \textit{De ver.}, q. 16, a. 1, arg. 11 [Leon. 22/2.502:73-79]: “contraria non possunt esse in eodem. Sed nobis est fomes innatus, qui semper inclinat ad malum. Ergo in nobis non potest esse aliquis habitus semper inclinans ad bonum: et ita synderesis, quae semper inclinat ad bonum, non est habitus, vel potentia cum habitu, sed potentia absolute.”

\footnote{118} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 78, a. 3 [Leon. 6.73-74]: “ex impulso appetitus sensitivi, sicut cum peccat ex passione.”

\footnote{119} Ibid.: “dispositionem corruptam inclinanlem ad malum, ita quod secundum illam dispositionem fit homini quasi conveniens et simile aliquod malum, et in hoc, ratione convenientiae, tendit voluntas quasi in bonum, quia unumquodque secundum se tendit in id quod sibi est conveniens.”

\footnote{120} Ibid.: “aegritudinalis habitudo ex parte corporis, sicut aliquis habens quasdam naturales inclinationes ad aliqua peccata, propter corruptionem naturae in ipso.”
nature through illness. In any event, this sense of “naturally inclined” is not the sense St. Thomas uses with respect to man’s specific form, which is the sense of natural inclination proper to natural law.

2. Inclinations of the Various Parts and Powers

Within the treatise on law, St. Thomas does not speak of natural inclinations to sin. But he does speak of the “fomes of sin” and of the various inclinations of the parts and powers of man’s nature, which must be “regulated by reason,” as if to suggest an opposition between reason, on one hand, and the sinful (or at least potentially sinful) inclinations of the concupiscible and irascible appetites. But this would be to misread the text for three reasons. First, man’s nature, though it has various parts and powers, is a single composite: rational animal substance. Precisely to the extent a lower power strays from the order of reason, its inclination ceases to be natural in the full sense proper to man’s nature. As noted, “whatever is contrary to the order of reason is, properly speaking, contrary to the nature of man, as man.” In his discussion of the fomes of sin in ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6, he observes that the inclination of sensuality, considered “just as it is in other animals” (prout est in aliis animalibus) with respect to animal nature in the abstract, is towards the common good of the animal’s species, which is to say, the perpetuation of the species. To look at the inclination

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121 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “omnes inclinationes quarumcumque partium humanae naturae, puta concupiscibilis et irascibilis, secundum quod regulantur ratione, pertinent ad legem naturalem, et reducuntur ad unum primum praeceptum, ut dictum est. Et secundum hoc, sunt multa praecepta legis naturae in seipsis, quae tamen communicant in una radice.”

122 ST I-II, q. 71, a. 2 [Leon. 7.5]: “id quod est contra ordinem rationis, proprie est contra naturam hominis inquantum est homo.”

123 ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6, ad 3 [Leon. 7.158]: “ratio illa procedit de fomite quantum ad inclinationem propriam, non autem quantum ad suam originem. Et tamen si consideretur inclinatio sensualitatis prout est in aliis animalibus, sic ordinatur ad bonum commune, idest ad conservationem naturae in specie vel in individuo. Et hoc est etiam in homine, prout sensualitas subditur rationi.”
of sensuality by itself, without considering man’s rationality, would be to look at this inclination “precisively,” that is, in abstraction from the specific difference of rationality. This inclination is good in man only insofar as it is subordinated to reason within man’s whole nature. It is only called “fomes” insofar as it “departs from the order of reason” (exit rationis ordinem).  

3. “Natural” Inclinations to Particular Vices

In a few texts, St. Thomas speaks of natural inclinations to specific vices. For example, he says there is a strong “inclination of human nature” (inclinatio naturae humanae) towards the vice of pusillanimity, which is against virtue because virtue is “chiefly ordered to restrain human inclinations to evil.” Similarly, man is naturally inclined to the vice of illiberality and to the “love of riches” (amor divitiarum). It should be noted that

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124 ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6, ad 3 [Leon. 7.158]: “fomes dicitur secundum quod exit rationis ordinem.” See also ST III, q. 15, a. 2 [Leon. 11.187] (“Ad rationem autem fomitis pertinet inclinatio sensualis appetitus in id quod est contra rationem”); ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.158] (“Sic . . . ipsa sensualitatis inclinatio, quae fomes dicitur, in alis quidem animalibus simpliciter habet rationem legis, illo tamen modo quo in talibus lex dici potest, secundum directam inclinationem.”); ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6, ad 1 [Leon. 7.158] (“ratio illa procedit de fomite secundum se considerato, prout inclinat ad malum.”); ST III, q. 15, a. 2, s. c. [Leon. 11.187] (“spiritus sanctus excludit peccatum, et inclinationem peccati, quae importatur nomine fomitis”). Sensuality inclines to evil due to corruption by the fomes, which corruption is in the appetite in the manner of a habit. De ver., q. 16, a. 1, ad 7 [Leon. 22/2.505:313-18]: “hoc quod sensualitas inclinat semper ad malum, habet ex corruptione fomitis; quae quidem corruptio inest ei per modum cuiusdam habitus.” In contrast to the natural inclinations, upon which follow the precepts of the natural law, the inclinations of the fomes are law only as punishment. ST I-II, q. 93, a. 3, ad 1 [Leon. 7.164]: “fomes habet rationem legis in homine, inquantum est poena consequens divinam iustitiam, et secundum hoc manifestum est quod derivatur a lege aeterna. Inquantum vero inclinat ad peccatum, sic contrariatur legi Dei, et non habet rationem legis.”

125 In IV Ethic., lect. 11, n. 7 [Leon. 47/2.238:86-88]: “ad hoc praecepue ordinatur ut reprimantur humanae inclinationes ad malum.” Although this text is commentary on Aristotle, it is consistent with St. Thomas’s understanding of a natural inclination to evil on the part of the body, as we shall see below. It is, however, interesting to note that St. Thomas speaks of a natural inclination to evil chiefly in the context of his commentary on the Ethics, whereas this usage of NI-terms is unusual elsewhere in the corpus.

126 In IV Ethic., lect. 5, n. 2 [Leon. 47/2.215:17-25]: “illud ad quod homo naturaliter inclinatur, non de facili removetur ab eo. Magis autem inclinatur homo ad illiberalitatem, quam ad prodigalitatem. Cuius signum est, quod plures inveniuntur amatores et conservatores pecuniarum, quam datores, id autem quod naturaliter est in pluribus invenitur. In tantum autem natura inclinat ad amorem divitiarum, inquantum per eas vita hominis conservatur.” Here again, although this text is commentary, it is consistent with St. Thomas’s views elsewhere if natura inclinat is taken in the narrow, material sense. Cf. ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170] (man’s natural inclination to self-preservation). Although covetousness for riches is natural for the old, because riches help
these inclinations are vicious only inasmuch as they are at odds with reason. They are natural with respect to that nature which man has in common with all substances (as described in \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 2) for they are rooted in man’s natural inclination to self-preservation inasmuch as it is through riches that “human life is preserved.” Another example, as we have seen, is that men are naturally inclined to the vice of intemperance inasmuch as that vice is in accord with our sensitive nature.\footnote{\textit{De ver.}, q. 24 a. 10 arg. 5 [Leon. 22/3.703:1-9]. Augustine does not use the term \textit{inclinatio naturalis} in this context (or at all). See discussion of Augustine in Chapter II for citation of, and comment on, this text.} But St. Thomas also makes clear that the virtue of temperance is in accord with man’s rational nature. In one case, he speaks of a vicious habit (i.e., “injustice”) as “by its nature” having an inclination to evil.\footnote{\textit{In Il Ethic.}, lect. 6, n. 19 [Leon. 47/2.407:235-8]: “Nam habitus inustitiae secundum propriam naturam habet inclinationem ad malum; sed homo inustus habet in sua potestate in bonum vel malum inclinari.”} Here he seems to be using the the term \textit{natura} in the broad Boethian sense of anything insofar as it is intelligible. Injustice as such is something evil, so its “nature” is evil.

\textbf{4. Quasi-Natural Inclination}

In a few texts, St. Thomas speaks of a “quasi-natural inclination” (\textit{quasi naturalis inclinatio}). Taking St. Augustine’s view that all necessity is either that of force or natural inclination, St. Thomas considers the objection that the necessity of sinning cannot be that of natural inclination because sin is against nature.\footnote{\textit{In II Ethic.}, lect. 10, n. 11 [Leon. 47/1.112:143-57]: “Cum enim ad virtutem pertineat repellere vitia, intentio virtutis est ad illa vitia potius repellenda ad quae maiores etiam inclinationem habemus. Et ideo illa vitia ad quae sumus qualitercumque magis nati, ipsa sunt magis contraria virtuti. Sicut magis sumus nati ad prosequendum delectationes quam ad fugiendum eas, propter hoc facilime moverem ad intemperantiam, quae importat excessum delectationum. Sic igitur illa vitia magis dicimus esse contraria virtutii, quae magis nata sunt crescre in nobis, propter hoc quod naturaliter inclinamus ad ipsa. Et ideo intemperantia, ad quam pertinet superabundantia delectationum, magis est contraria temperantia quam insensibilitas.”} In reply, he explains that sin “has been made, as it were (\textit{quasi}), natural to the rational mind” and thus the necessity of sin will be

\begin{itemize}
\item protect life, such covetousness is sinful if riches are desired beyond due measure. \textit{ST} II-II, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 9.456].
\item \textit{In Il Ethic.}, lect. 10, n. 11 [Leon. 47/1.112:143-57]: “Cum enim ad virtutem pertineat repellere vitia, intentio virtutis est ad illa vitia potius repellenda ad quae maiores etiam inclinationem habemus. Et ideo illa vitia ad quae sumus qualitercumque magis nati, ipsa sunt magis contraria virtuti. Sicut magis sumus nati ad prosequendum delectationes quam ad fugiendum eas, propter hoc facilime moverem ad intemperantiam, quae importat excessum delectationum. Sic igitur illa vitia magis dicimus esse contraria virtutii, quae magis nata sunt crescre in nobis, propter hoc quod naturaliter inclinamus ad ipsa. Et ideo intemperantia, ad quam pertinet superabundantia delectationum, magis est contraria temperantia quam insensibilitas.”
\item \textit{In VII Ethic.}, lect. 6, n. 19 [Leon. 47/2.407:235-8]: “Nam habitus inustitiae secundum propriam naturam habet inclinationem ad malum; sed homo inustus habet in sua potestate in bonum vel malum inclinari.”
\end{itemize}
that of a “quasi-natural inclination.”

The term *quasi* means “as if.” Sin is natural *as if* it were nature, that is, in the sense of a second nature. It is only *as habit* that sin is “second nature.” In other words, sin is only “natural” in the sense that “a habit works in the one who has it like a sort of nature. The necessity which is had from a habit, then, is reduced to a natural inclination.”

5. Natural Inclination vs. Virtue?

In a few texts, St. Thomas seems to pit natural inclination against virtue, in a manner that anticipates Mill and Kant. But St. Thomas’s starting point is Aristotle. The virtues of fortitude and temperance are contrary to those things to which nature most strongly inclines man:

As the Philosopher says (Ethic. II, 93) in order to be virtuous we must avoid those things to which we are most naturally inclined (*maxime inclinat natura*). Hence it is that, since nature inclines us chiefly to fear dangers of death, and to seek pleasures of the flesh, fortitude is chiefly commended for a certain steadfast perseverance against such dangers, and temperance for a certain restraint from pleasures of the flesh.

But then St. Thomas explains that man has contrary inclinations with regard to seeking knowledge (*cognitio*)—those inclinations of the soul and of the body:

For on the part of the soul, he is inclined to desire knowledge of things; and so it behooves him to exercise a praiseworthy restraint on this desire, lest he seek knowledge immoderately

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130 *De ver.*, q. 24 a. 10 ad 5 [Leon. 22/3.708:399-402]: “cum peccatum sit menti rationali quasi naturale effectum, illa necessitas non erit coactionis, sed quasi naturalis inclinationis.”

131 Similarly, the malice of some men is called natural “because of custom which is a second nature.” *ST* I, q. 63, a. 4, ad 2 [Leon. 5.129]: “malitia aliquorum hominum potest dici naturalis . . . propter consuetudinem, quae est altera natura.”

132 *De ver.*, q. 24, a. 12, ad s.c. 9 [Leon. 22/3.720:655-59]: “peccatum effectum est quasi naturale peccatori: habitus enim sicut quaedam natura operatur in habente; unde necessitas quae ex habitu est, reductur ad naturalem inclinationem.”

133 *ST* II-II, q. 166, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.344]: “sicut philosophus dicit, in II Ethic., ad hoc quod homo fiat virtuosus, oporet quod servet se ab his ad quae maxime inclinat natura. Et inde est quod, quia natura praecipue inlinat ad timendum mortis pericula et ad sectandum delectabilia carnis, quod laus virtutis fortitudinis praecipue consistit in quadam firmitate persistendi contra huiusmodi pericula, et laus virtutis temperantiae in quadam refrenatione a delectabilibus carnis.”
To have the virtue of “studiousness” (studiositas) does not mean to study all the time, at the body’s expense. Rather, studiositas, although it chiefly concerns moderation in the pursuit of knowledge, strikes the right balance between the two inclinations:

Accordingly, as regards the first inclination [i.e., that of the soul] studiousness is a kind of restraint, and it is in this sense that it is reckoned a part of temperance. But as to the second inclination [i.e., that of the body, which must be overcome], this virtue derives its praise from a certain keenness of interest in seeking knowledge of things; and from this it takes its name. The former is more essential to this virtue than the latter: since the desire to know directly regards knowledge, to which studiousness is directed, whereas the trouble of learning is an obstacle to knowledge, wherefore it is regarded by this virtue [i.e., of fortitude] indirectly, as by that which removes an obstacle.

The text is important for purposes of the question at hand because it draws attention to the distinction between what we have described as the proper sense of natural inclination (that of nature considered as form, i.e., the inclination of soul) and the improper senses of natural inclination (that of nature as matter, i.e., the inclination of the body). The text is distinctive in that St. Thomas combines natural inclination in the proper sense with natural inclination in the improper sense in a single notion of contraria inclinatio.

There are several ways in which a thing can have a “natural” inclination towards evil, sin, or vice. In none of these cases, however, does the thing have a natural inclination in the

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134 ST II-II, q. 166, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.344]: “Quia ex parte animae, inclinatur homo ad hoc quod cognitionem rerum desideret, et sic oportet ut homo laudabiliter huiusmodi appetitum refrenet, ne immoderate rerum cognitioni intendat. Ex parte vero naturae corporalis, homo inclinatur ad hoc ut laborem inquirendi scientiam vitet.”

135 ST II-II, q. 166, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.344]: “Quantum igitur ad primum, studiositas in refrenatione consistit, et secundum hoc ponitur pars temperantiae. Sed quantum ad secundum laus huius virtutis consistit in quadam vehementia intentionis ad scientiam rerum perciendi, et ex hoc nominatur. Primum autem est essentialis huic virtuti quam secundum. Nam appetitus cognoscendi per se respicit cognitionem, ad quam ordinarut studiositas. Sed labor addiscendi est impedimentum quoddam cognitionis, unde respicitur ab hac virtute per accidents, quasi removendo prohibens.”

136 As we saw in the discussion in Chapter II of Aristotle as a possible source of St. Thomas’s natural inclination doctrine, St. Thomas often uses the term inclinatio naturalis in his commentary on the Ethics in the sense of the natural inclination of the body as something to be overcome. Although this text is in the Summa theologiae, it is expressly based on book II of the Ethics.
sense proper to the form of the thing. In one way, there may be a certain evil connected with the good towards which the thing is naturally inclined. St. Thomas gives the example of the fox, which, “in seeking its food, has a natural inclination to do so with a certain skill coupled with deceit.” But deceit is not evil in the fox, since it is natural to it.\textsuperscript{137} Similarly, the fact that fire consumes other things (which is evil for those things) does not make fire evil in its nature.\textsuperscript{138}

\textbf{6. Nature inclines to evil accidentally, not essentially}

Inasmuch as anything with a sensitive nature inclines towards any particular good that is connected to a particular evil, the thing can be said to be naturally inclined to the evil, but only “accidentally.” Everything that exists, “insofar as it has some nature, naturally tends to some good.”\textsuperscript{139} If, however,

there be anything whose nature is inclined towards some particular good, it can tend naturally to some evil; not as evil, but accidentally, as connected with some good. But if anything of its nature be inclined to good in general, then of its own nature it cannot be inclined to evil. Now it is manifest that every intellectual nature is inclined towards good in general, which it can apprehend and which is the object of the will.\textsuperscript{140}

For this reason, demons have no natural inclination to evil in any sense because they are

\textsuperscript{137} Nor is fierceness considered evil in a dog. \textit{ST I}, q. 63, a. 4, ad 3 [Leon. 5.129]: “animalia bruta secundum naturam sensitivam habent naturalem inclinationem ad quaedam particularia bona, quibus coniuncta sunt aliqua mala; sicut vulpes ad quaerendum victum sagaciter, cui adiungitur dolositas. Unde esse dolosum non est malum vulpi, cum sit ei naturale; sicut nec esse furiosum est malum cani.”

\textsuperscript{138} \textit{ST I}, q. 63, a. 4 [Leon. 5.129].

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{ST I}, q. 63, a. 4 [Leon. 5.129]: “omne quod est, inquantum est et naturam habet aliquam, in bonum aliquod naturaliter tendit.”

\textsuperscript{140} \textit{ST I}, q. 63, a. 4 [Leon. 5.129]: “Si ergo aliquid sit cuius natura ordinetur in aliquod bonum particolare, potest naturaliter tendere in aliquod malum, non inquantum malum, sed per accidens, inquantum est coniunctum cuidam bono. Si vero aliquid sit cuius natura ordinetur in aliquod bonum secundum communem boni rationem hoc secundum suam naturam non potest tendere in aliquod malum. Manifestum est autem quod quaelibet natura intellectualis habet ordinem in bonum universale, quod potest apprehendere, et quod est objectum voluntatis.” See also \textit{ST I}, q. 63, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 5.129]: “Natura autem sensitiva ordinatur ad aliquod bonum particulare, cui potest esse coniunctum malum. Et secundum hoc, aliquam inclinationem naturalem habere possunt ad malum; per accidens tamen, inquantum malum est coniunctum bono.”
Man, by contrast, because he is a composite of intellectual and sensitive nature, can in a secondary sense have a natural inclination to particular evils. But his will, by nature, can have no general inclination to evil. In another way, there can be a natural inclination on the part of the sensitive nature in a particular individual man to some “inordinate passion, as some people are said to be naturally wrathful or lustful; but not on the part of the intellectual nature.”

We see, then, that there is no natural inclination, properly speaking, in man to evil, sin, or vice. But where are these inclinations if not in man’s nature? Sinful and vicious inclinations are inclinations of passion or habit, which are at the level of the “higher” appetites, namely the sensitive and rational appetites. See Chapter VI (Appetitus) for further discussion of the higher appetites.

As discussed in Chapter I, not every inclination is a natural inclination. In the context of sin and vice, we must especially distinguish between, on one hand, natural inclination and, on the other hand, inclinations of passion and habit. Just as St. Thomas distinguishes between virtue and nature, so he distinguishes between vice and nature. Whatever is natural is only good and inclines to good. Some passions are not natural because they are “contrary to the very nature of a natural inclination.” For example, despair is unnatural.

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141 Ibid.
142 *ST I*, q. 63, a. 4, ad 2 [Leon. 5.129]: “malitia aliquorum hominum potest dici naturalis . . . propter naturalem inclinationem ex parte naturae sensitivae, ad aliquam inordinatam passionem, sicut quidam dicuntur naturaliter iracundi vel concupiscentes; non autem ex parte naturae intellectualis.”
143 See, e.g., *In II Ethic.*, lect. 8, n. 3 [Leon. 47/1.102:45-46] (“passiones important inclinationem quandam quae potest resistere et repugnare rationi”); *In III Ethic.*, lect. 13, n. 6 [Leon. 47/1.156:70-72] (“iudicium quo homo iudicat aliquid esse bonum ut secundum se et simpliciter provenit ex inclinatione habitus”).
144 See *In IV Sent.*, d. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 4, ad 3 [Moos 3.606]: “quidquid in eis est naturale, totum est bonum, et ad bonum inclinans; sed liberum arbitrium in eis est in malitia obstinatum. Et quia motus virtutis et vitii non consequitur inclinationem naturae, sed magis motum liberi arbitrii; ideo non oportet quod quamvis naturaliter inclinetur ad bonum, motus virtutis in eis sit, vel esse possit.”
inasmuch as it “flies from good on account of some difficulty” and fear, though natural in itself, it unnatural to the extent it “shrinks from repelling a contrary evil.”

There is no natural appetite to evil, but there are sinful inclinations (i.e., sinful appetites) that follow upon apprehension. The critical point of distinction is apprehension. The thing apprehended as good is not necessarily a true good for the creature apprehending it. Natural inclination (i.e., natural appetite) does not follow upon apprehension and therefore cannot err. Error enters at the point of apprehension. Although passion and habit incline towards things that a man apprehends to be good, they may err inasmuch as the apprehension is in error.

At a certain level, “every appetite” and “every inclination is to something good,” for “the good is that which all desire.” So the rational appetite must be to a good. But the

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145 ST I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273-74]: “quaedam de passionibus animae quandoque dicuntur naturales, ut amor, desiderium et spes, aliae vero naturales dici non possunt. . . . huiusmodi motus sunt contra rationem inclinationis naturalis, puta quod desperatio refugit bonum propter aliquam difficultatem; et timor refugit impugnationem mali contrarii, ad quod est inclinatio naturalis. Et ideo huiusmodi passiones nullo modo attribuuntur rebus inanimatis.” There can, of course, be natural fear. See ibid.: “potest dici timor naturalis. Et distinguuntur a timore non naturali, secundum diversitatem objecti.” Although desperatio is the contrary of hope, it seems that there can be natural despair in a case where a desired good is impossible to obtain. See ST I-II, q. 40, a. 4, ad 3: “desperatio non importat solam privationem spei; sed importat quendam recessum a re desiderata, propter aestimatam impossibilitatem adipiscendi.”

146 See De ver., q. 24, a. 10 [Leon. 22/3.706:232-53]: “Cum autem naturaliter insit cuilibet creaturae appetitus boni, nullus ad peccandum inducitur nisi sub aliqua specie apparentis boni. Quamvis enim fornicator in universalis sciat fornicationem esse malum, tamen cum in fornicationem consentit, aestimat fornicationem esse sibi bonum ut nunc ad agendum. In qua quidem aestimatione tria pensanda sunt. Quorum primum est ipse impetus passionis, puta concupiscientiae vel irae, per quam intercipitur judicium rationis, ne actu iudicet in particulari quod in universali habitu tenet, sed sequatur passionis inclinationem, ut consentiat in illud in quod passio tendit quasi per se bonum. Secundum est inclinationi habitus: qui quidem cum sit quasi quaedam natura habentis, ut philosophus dicit, quod consuetudo est altera natura, et Tullius in rhetoricis, quod virtus consentit rationi in modum naturae; pari ratione vitii habitus quasi natura quaedam inclinat in id quod est sibi conveniens.”

147 ST I-II, q. 8, a. 1 [Leon. 6.68]: “Omnis autem appetitus non est nisi boni. Cuius ratio est quia appetitus nihil alius est quam inclinatio appetentis in aliquid. Nihil autem inclinatur nisi in aliquid simile et conveniens. Cum igitur omnis res, inquantum est ens et substantia, sit quoddam bonum, nessece est ut omnis inclinatio sit in bonum. Et inde est quod philosophus dicit, in I Ethic. quod bonum est quod omnia appetunt.”
difference from natural appetite is that, in the case of sensitive or rational appetite, the
good might only be an “apparent” good:

Since every inclination results from a form, the natural appetite results from a form existing in
the nature of things: while the sensitive appetite, as also the intellective or rational appetite,
which we call the will, follows from an apprehended form. Therefore, just as the natural
appetite tends to good existing in a thing; so the animal or voluntary appetite tends to a good
which is apprehended. Consequently, in order that the will tend to anything, it is requisite, not
that this be good in very truth, but that it be apprehended as good. Wherefore the Philosopher
says (Phys. II, 3) that “the end is a good, or an apparent good.”

E. Reason’s Rule over Unruly Inclinations

Given the diversity within St. Thomas’s nature-lexicon, and the dead weight of
modern understandings of nature under which we labor in reading his works, it is
understandable that some contemporary natural law scholars would conceive of reason as
somehow apart from, and above, the welter of unruly natural inclinations. Reason must “ride
herd” on nature, keeping the various natural inclinations “in line.” There is much fodder for
this view of natural inclination in the Thomistic corpus. Indeed, even the paramountly human
natural inclination to virtue, without reason’s direction, has the potential for mischief, just as
“if a running horse be blind, the faster it runs the more heavily will it fall, and the more
grievously will it be hurt.” For example, to infer from St. Thomas’s argument, an
individual’s natural inclination to courage might result in reckless or foolhardy actions.

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148 ST I-II, q. 8, a. 1 [Leon. 6.68]: “cum omnis inclinatio consequatur aliquam formam, appetitus
naturalis consequitur formam in natura existentem, appetitus autem sensitivus, vel etiam intellectivus seu
rationalis, qui dicitur voluntas, sequitur formam apprehensam. Sicut igitur id in quod tendit appetitus naturalis,
est bonum existens in re; ita id in quod tendit appetitus animalis vel voluntarius, est bonum apprehensum. Ad
hoc igitur quod voluntas in aliquod tendat, non requiritur quod sit bonum in rei veritate, sed quod apprehendatur
in ratione boni. Et propter hoc philosophus dicit, in II Physic. quod finis est bonum, vel apparens bonum.”

149 ST I-II, q. 58, a. 4, ad 3: “naturalis inclinatio ad bonum virtutis, est quaedam inchoatio virtutis, non
autem est virtus perfecta. Huuismodi enim inclinatio, quanto est fortior, tanto potest esse periculosior, nisi recta
ratio adiungat, per quam fiat recta electio eorum quae conveniunt ad debitum finem, sicut equus currens, si sit
caecus, tanto fortius impingit et laeditur, quanto fortius currit.”
In the treatise on law, St. Thomas seeks to show that there is one natural law for all men. Anticipating modern emotivist ethical theories, he considers this objection:

[T]o the natural law belongs everything to which a man is inclined according to his nature. Now different men are naturally inclined to different things; some to the desire of pleasures, others to the desire of honors, and other men to other things. Therefore there is not one natural law for all.\(^{150}\)

In his reply, St. Thomas seems to concede the point that man has various and conflicting natural inclinations which need the firm direction of reason: “As, in man, reason rules and commands the other powers, so it is fitting that all the natural inclinations belonging to the other powers be directed according to reason. Wherefore it is universally right for all men, that all their inclinations should be directed according to reason.”\(^{151}\)

The Millian notion that reason is opposed to or above nature is so deeply ingrained in modern philosophy and in modern European usage of the term “nature” that even Thomists are not immune from the inertia, as it were, of modern thought. As discussed in previous chapters, many Thomists speak by default of natural inclinations as if they were exclusively the inclinations of man’s biological nature in contrast to reason. In this view, the “natural” part of natural law is man’s bodily urges understood as the matter on which practical reason operates to produce natural law. Martin Rhonheimer, for example, states

reason has a relationship to the natural inclinations—because they are natural—that mirrors that of the relationship between form and matter. . . . The naturalness of good, as it is formulated in the natural law . . . cannot be reduced to the simple naturalness of the individual natural inclinations and their goods, ends, and acts.\(^{152}\)

\(^{150}\) \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 4, arg. 3 [Leon. 7.171]: “ad legem naturae pertinet id ad quod homo secundum naturam suam inclinatur, ut supra dictum est. Sed diversi homines naturaliter ad diversa inclinantur, alii quidem ad concupiscientiam voluptatum, alii ad desideria honorum, alii ad alia. Ergo non est una lex naturalis apud omnes.”

\(^{151}\) \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94 a. 4, ad 3 [Leon. 7.172]: “sicut ratio in homine dominatur et imperat aliis potentiiis, ita oportet quod omnes inclinationes naturales ad alias potentias pertinentes ordinentur secundum rationem. Unde hoc est apud omnes communiter rectum, ut secundum rationem dirigantur omnes hominum inclinationes.”

\(^{152}\) Martin Rhonheimer, “The Cognitive Structure of the Natural Law and Truth of Subjectivity,” \textit{The Thomist 67} (2003): 28. See also ibid., 20: “at the level of their mere naturalness, does following the tendency to
Taking “nature” in a similar sense, Odon Lottin concludes that St. Thomas “secretly sympathized” with the Roman jurist Ulpian’s definition of natural law as “that which nature teaches all animals.”

This bifurcative account is, of course, partially true in two senses which must be readily granted. First, man’s generic nature, which is to say the bodily and animal part of his nature, is indeed a part or aspect or moment of his composite rational-animal-substantial nature. The corrective to the modern exclusion of reason from nature is not to affirm the opposite—i.e., to say that man’s nature is only rational in a way that waters down, or even washes out, the integrity and importance of his animality.

Second, to emphasize the composite nature of man, which includes reason, is not to say that the natural law springs spontaneously or necessarily from innate principles. There is

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153 Lottin, Odon. *Le droit naturel chez saint Thomas d’Aquin et ses prédécesseurs*. 2nd ed. (Bruges: Beyart, 1931), 62, 65. “[L]e sens strict que saint Thomas attribue au *jus naturae* . . . *quod natura omnia animalia docuit*.” Ibid., 65. This is not to say that Ulpian himself, who does not speak in terms of matter and form, held such a view.

154 For decades, certain theologians have been at pains to emphasize the rational character of morality in contrast to the merely animal functions and structures. On one hand, dissenting theologians such as Charles Curran reject Thomas’s natural law outright because of what they perceive to be his “biologism” and Ulpianic approach, which puts bodily nature first. On the other hand, Jean Porter, in her superb historical investigations of scholastic natural law theories, emphasizes a Thomistic understanding of “nature as reason” to the point that it is unclear what role human bodily nature plays in Thomas’s morality. The result is a Thomistic natural law with very little universally applicable content.
certainly much work for reason to do in its operation in the concrete circumstance of each individual’s life and community. But the operations of reason and will presuppose rational nature, as will be discussed in Chapter VI.

But reason, emphatically, is not above human nature. Something is said to be natural to a thing “which is fitting to it according to the condition of its form, through which it is constituted in such nature, as fire naturally tends upward.” But the form “through which man is man, is itself reason and intellect. Whence he naturally tends toward that which is fitting to him according to reason and intellect.”¹⁵⁵ Man’s reason rules the inclinations of his various parts and powers, but reason “holds the principate in human nature,” not above nature.¹⁵⁶ The order which reason maintains within man is, in turn, not simply foisted upon nature by reason, but is, to the extent it is an order “of the natural inclinations” given in the nature of man’s reason. Sin lies, not in rejection by the lower appetites of a positive order manufactured by man’s reason, but instead in a straying away from the “natural rectitude” of reason, which is a certain natural inclination instilled in nature by God.¹⁵⁷

But what precisely is the relationship between natural reason and “the rest” of man’s nature? In what does the natural order of reason—as part of “the order of nature [which] is from God himself”—consist?¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ *In II Sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 1 [Mand. 2.992]: “illud dicitur esse naturale alicui rei quod convenit sibi secundum conditionem suae formae, per quam in tali natura constituitur, sicut ignis naturaliter tendit sursum. Forma autem per quam homo est homo, est ipsa ratio et intellectus.”

¹⁵⁶ *ST* II-II, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 9.456] (emphasis added): “inclusiones naturales sunt regulandae secundum rationem, quae principatum tenet in natura humana.”

¹⁵⁷ *In II Sent.*, d. 42, q. 2, a. 5 [Mand. 2.1085]: “Unicuique enim naturae indita est naturalis quaedam inclinatio in suum finem: et ideo in ratione est quaedam naturalis rectitudo, per quam in finem inclinatur: et ideo illud quod abducit a fine illo, est discordans a ratione: et quia lex naturalis est secundum quam ratio recta est, ideo Augustinus dicit contra Faustum Manich. quod peccatum dicitur, inquantum discordat a lege aeterna, cujus expressio est ipsa lex naturalis.”

¹⁵⁸ *ST* II-II, q. 154, a. 12, ad 1 [Leon. 10.247]: “ordo naturae [qui] est ab ipso Deo.”
1. Reason vs. Nature in St. Thomas?

In fairness to those Thomists mentioned above who pit reason against nature, St. Thomas himself, in some texts, seems to divide reason against nature in a certain sense. Not only does he sometimes describe an opposition between virtue and natural inclination, he also in several texts expressly speaks of reason as governing or even trumping natural inclination. For example, he says that a large group of men usually “follows its natural inclinations, insofar as men in a multitude acquiesce to the passions.”\footnote{159} By contrast, wise men “by reason” overcome these passions. Similarly, while most people do not resist their bodily tendencies, in some cases, an individual man “may resist, perhaps, the natural inclination by means of reason.”\footnote{160}

Most importantly for the purposes of this dissertation, in \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, St. Thomas seems to give his definitive statement of the reason-versus-nature account of natural inclinations. In an article on whether there is one natural law for all people, he considers an objection which is based on a mistaken (indeed proto-modern) understanding of human natural inclinations:

\begin{quote}
[T]o the natural pertains that to which man according to his nature is inclined, as stated above [q. 94, a. 2]. But diverse men are naturally inclined to diverse things, some to the desire of pleasures, others to the desire of honors, and other men to other things. Therefore there is not one natural law for all.\footnote{161}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{159} In particular, men in a group are more likely to be influenced by celestial bodies acting upon the predominant temperament of the individuals in the group. \textit{De ver.}, q. 5, a. 10, ad 7 [Leon. 22/1,171:241-53]: “multitudo ut in pluribus sequitur inclinationes naturales, inquantum homines multitudinis acquiescunt passionibus; sed sapientes ratione superant passiones et inclinationes praedictas. Et ideo magis est probable de aliqua multitudine quod operetur id ad quod inclinat corpus caeleste, quam de uno singulari, qui forte per rationem superat inclinationem praedictam. Et simile esset, si una multitudo hominum cholericum poneretur, non de facili contingere quin ad iracundiam moverentur, quamvis de uno posset magis accidere.”
\item \footnote{160} \textit{SCG} III, cap. 85, n. 20 [Leon. 14.256]: “impressio stellarum in pluribus sortitur effectum, qui non resistunt inclinationi quae est ex corpore; non autem semper in hoc vel in illo, qui forte per rationem naturali inclinationi resistit.”
\item \footnote{161} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 4, arg. 3 [Leon. 7.171]: “ad legem naturae pertinet id ad quod homo secundum naturam suam inclinatur, ut supra dictum est. Sed diversi homines naturaliter ad diversa inclinantur, alii quidem
In reply, he states that the natural inclinations must be ordered by reason:

As, in man, reason rules and commands the other powers, so it is fitting that all the natural inclinations pertaining to the other powers be ordered according to reason. Wherefore it is universally right for all men, that all human inclinations should be directed according to reason. 162

Similarly, St. Thomas states that “all the inclinations of any parts whatsoever of human nature, e.g. of the concupiscible or irascible parts, insofar as they are ruled by reason, belong to the natural law.” 163

Looked at through modern lenses, it is easy to miss or distort the meaning of this text. If we are quick to view nature as the realm of the irrational, the text seems to show that reason is opposed to, or at least wholly above, nature. But the text refers, importantly, to the natural inclination of the other powers—i.e., the powers other than reason and will. The text must be read in the context of this statement in the body of the same article: “to the natural law belong those things to which a man is inclined naturally: and among these it is proper to man to be inclined to act according to reason.” 164

This is something of a paradox: man’s natural inclinations must be regulated by reason, yet man’s nature is itself, pre-eminently, reason. 165 This locus classicus about man being naturally inclined to act according to reason, rather than solving the problem of the relationship between reason and “the inclinations,” instead prompts certain hard questions.

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162 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 4, ad 3 [Leon. 7.172]: “sicut ratio in homine dominatur et imperat aliis potentiis, ita oportet quod omnes inclinationes naturales ad alias potentias pertinentes ordinentur secundum rationem. Unde hoc est apud omnes communiter rectum, ut secundum rationem dirigantur omnes hominum inclinationes.”

163 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “omnes inclinationes quamcumque partium humanae naturae, puta concupiscibilis et irascibilis, secundum quod regulantur ratione, pertinent ad legem naturalem.”

164 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 4 [Leon. 7.172]: “ad legem naturae pertinent ea ad quae homo naturaliter inclinatur; inter quae homini proprium est ut inclinetur ad agendum secundum rationem.”

165 This text exemplifies the paradox: ST II-II, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 9.456]: “inclinationes naturales sunt regulandae secundum rationem, quae principatum tenet in natura humana.”
What does it mean to be “regulated” by reason? Is the order of reason entirely a product of deliberate practical reason? Is it arbitrary? Or is it not, as we saw in Chapter III, based on a natural order—i.e., a natural order of the natural inclinations referred to in q. 94, a. 2? Is the content of reason’s natural inclination partly specified by the natural inclinations of the non-rational or pre-rational parts of man’s nature?166

An analysis of the texts regarding natural inclination shows that there is an order given in human nature itself that provides a standard for reason’s regulation. This is not to say that the proper order of nature comes about through a purely “natural” process, in the sense of flowing from natural principles without apprehension. Nor is reason’s role reduced to the purely ministerial function of apprehending and, in effect, rubber-stamping what nature presents as good ends to be pursued or evil contraries to be averted. Rather, reason is given by nature a fixed hierarchy of the proper ends of human life. Reason’s task, for which it is equipped by nature, is to find or devise means that serve the achievement of properly human ends according to the hierarchy given by nature.

Whenever St. Thomas speaks of the natural inclination within man, or within an individual man, it is important to take note of the context. As noted, when he says “nature” or “natural” in reference to man, he sometimes means human nature in the full and proper sense: the substantial nature of man as rational animal, which is the proper sense of human nature. But in other cases he means the nature of the individual in terms of bodily complexion. Between these two poles, he often means the inclination of a particular part or power of man, considered in abstraction from human nature as an ordered whole. The natural

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166 For example, does the fact that a sword wound would injure the body make the infliction of, or taking the risk of sustaining, such a wound intrinsically unreasonable?
inclination of a part or power by itself is towards whatever the proper object of that part or power may be, but this notion of natural inclination, abstracted from the whole man, is not the natural inclination of man properly speaking. Reason looks at the whole man and the natural inclinations of his several parts and powers. But it is reason’s nature, and its natural inclination, to order the other inclinations in moral action.

One example St. Thomas gives of a natural inclination being regulated or governed by reason is the natural inclination of old people to covetousness. The old, on account of an imperfection or lack within their own nature, seek “exterior goods” (exteriora rea) more avidly than do other people, as every needy person seeks help for the necessities of life. But such striving for external goods is a sin if it “exceed[s] the due measure of reason with regard to riches.”\(^{167}\) This natural inclination of the old, as well as man’s natural inclinations to illiberality and the love of riches in general, are natural with respect to the nature man has in common with all substances—his natural inclination to self-preservation—inasmuch as it is through riches that “human life is preserved.”\(^{168}\) It should be noted that these inclinations are vicious only inasmuch as they are at odds with man’s proper nature—which is to act according to reason.

But why are covetousness, illiberality, and the like contrary to reason? How does reason know they are contrary to reason? How is reason “given,” as I have described it, the natural ends of human life and the hierarchical order of those ends? These are complex

\(^{167}\) *ST* II-II, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 9.456]: “debitam rationis mensuram circa divitias excedant.”

\(^{168}\) *In IV Ethic.*, lect. 5, n. 2 [Leon. 47/2,215:17-25]: “illud ad quod homo naturaliter inclinatur, non de facili removetur ab eo. Magis autem inclinatur homo ad illiberalitatem, quam ad prodigalitatem. Cuius signum est, quod plures inveniuntur amatores et conservatores pecuniarum, quam datores, id autem quod naturaliter est in pluribus invenitur. In tantum autem natura inclinat ad amorem divitiarum, inquantum per eas vita hominis conservatur.” Cf. *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170] (man’s natural inclination to self-preservation).
questions. Although my concern in this study is chiefly with nature and its inclinations, not with issues of knowledge, a few observations are in order based on what I have said about human rational nature. First, when we consider the question, “How does reason know nature’s ends and the order of those ends?” we must take care not to think in Cartesian terms.

It is fundamentally misleading to attribute to St. Thomas a concept of “nature” and its inclinations being somehow “down there,” while governing reason is “up here,” pure and unmixed with nature. For man’s nature is, first and foremost, reason. As I shall argue in Chapters VI and VII, the notion that natural inclinations must be either pre-cognitive or entirely dependent upon rational cognition by man is a false dilemma. In the sentence immediately prior to his discussion of the threefold order of the natural inclinations, St. Thomas writes:

Since . . . good has the nature of an end, and evil, the nature of a contrary, hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance.  

In this text, we see, first, that reason apprehends things. For St. Thomas, of course, speculative and practical reason are not separate powers. Speculative reason becomes, per extensionem, practical reason in matters of operation. The knowledge of natural ends is, as knowledge, first a theoretical knowledge. But just as there must first be beings before there can be theoretical knowledge of those being, likewise there must first be goods before there can be practical knowledge of those goods. Reason apprehends the distinct forms of things and the order among those things as beings because they exist; it then apprehends them as

169 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2: “Quia vero bonum habet rationem finis, malum autem rationem contrarii, inde est quod omnia illa ad quae homo habet naturalem inclinationem, ratio naturaliter apprehendit ut bona, et per consequens ut opere prosequenda, et contraria eorum ut mala et vitanda.”

170 ST I, q. 79, a. 11. On the unity of speculative and practical reason, see Joseph Pieper, Reality and the Good, 47-48.
goods because they are desirable. This is not a pre-cognitive “knowledge by inclination” that picks itself up by its own by its own bootstraps, as it were. It is, rather, an apprehension of reality, as it is given by God in nature.

Reason, as part of human nature, understands human nature as a whole and, concomitantly, understands the things that are needed to complete human nature. Reason, then, understands which things, as objects of pursuit, are fitting to, or contrary to, human rational nature. For example, reason understands the notion of a common good and can grasp which things or actions are consistent with the common good. Reason knows that the requirements of man’s higher nature, as it were, trump the unlimited pursuit of the goods of self-preservation. At the level of the individual, pursuing the needs of the body, avoiding injury, defending oneself from attackers, and the like are all in accord with the natural inclination man has in common with all substances.171 But, as St. Thomas makes clear, the requirements of reason, chiefly the requirements to act according to virtue, can trump the pursuit of the goods of man’s lower nature. According to reason, man has natural inclinations to expose his property or even his own life to danger for the sake of the political common good which is proper to him as a rational creature.172 These requirements of reason are not arbitrarily constructed by a tyrannical practical reason. Rather, the virtues are given, in principle, in human nature. St. Thomas frequently speaks of a natural inclination to virtue in general, and to particular virtues. It is one thing to say that man has a natural inclination to

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171 See, e.g., *ST* I-II, q. 87, a. 1 [Leon. 7.121] (natural inclination of man to repress those who rise up against him).
172 See *ST* I, q. 60, a. 5 [Leon. 5.104] (natural inclination of virtuous citizen to expose himself to mortal danger for the preservation of the whole republic); *ST* II-II, q. 26, a. 3 [Leon. 8.211-12] (natural inclination of man to suffer damage to his own property and person for sake of the common good); *Quodlibet* I, q. 4, a. 3 [Leon. 25/2.188:73-75] (natural inclination of the good citizen to expose himself to mortal danger for the common good).
his ultimate end, or to happiness, and that the way to happiness is a life lived in accord
with reason. It is another thing to say what is the content of rational life. But the various
inclinations and the virtues provide a sort of template for the rational life.

Some things are not within human reason’s control at all. At the level of nature itself,
natural inclination is not subject to reason’s command. This is most clear in the case of the
natural inclinations of the vegetative and generative powers. Because reason operates by way
of apprehension, the acts of the natural appetites that do not follow upon apprehension are
beyond reason’s control:

Some acts proceed from the natural appetite, others from the animal, or from the intellectual
appetite: for every agent desires an end in some way. Now the natural appetite does not follow
from some apprehension, as do the animal and the intellectual appetite. But the reason
commands by way of apprehensive power. Wherefore those acts that proceed from the
intellective or the animal appetite, can be commanded by reason: but not those acts that
proceed from the natural appetite. And such are the acts of the vegetal soul . . . . Consequently
the acts of the vegetal soul are not subject to the command of reason.173

But neither does reason control the natural inclination of any part or power of human nature
at its root. The apprehensive and appetitive powers incline towards their proper objects, even
if reason can control whether the man deliberately acts on those inclinations. For instance,
the power of sight is naturally inclined to see, that is, to see its proper object, color. Reason
cannot remove this natural inclination, but a man may deliberately frustrate or control the
operation of the visual power by closing his eyes, averting his gaze, donning rose-colored
glasses, or, in the extreme case, plucking out his eyes.

173 ST I-II, q. 17, a. 8: “actuum quidam procedunt ex appetitu naturali, quidam autem ex appetitu
animali vel intellectuali, omne enim agens aliquo modo appetit finem. Appetitus autem naturalis non
consequitur aliquam apprehensionem, sicut sequitur appetitus animalis et intellectualis. Ratio autem imperat per
modum apprehensivae virtutis. Et ideo actus illi qui procedunt ab appetitu intellectivo vel animali, possunt a
ratione imperari, non autem actus illi qui procedunt ex appetitu naturali. Huiusmodi autem sunt actus vegetabilis
animae, unde Gregorius Nyssenus dicit quod vocatur naturale quod generativum et nutritivum. Et propter hoc,
actus vegetabilis animae non subduntur imperio rationis.”
Reason indeed can enjoin or trump the pursuit of a given object towards which the lower appetite is, in a sense, naturally inclined. It is reason’s natural inclination to pursue whatever is good for the man as a whole. Reason is also naturally inclined to guide man to the virtues, including those virtues which pertain to the sensitive appetite, such as temperance. It should be noted that the sensitive appetite, considered in itself, is good and its inclinations are, properly speaking, natural. But the sensitive appetite becomes sinful “sensuality,” the forerunners of sin, when it “departs from the order of reason.” In other animals, the inclination of sensuality is spontaneously ordered to the common good for a given species of animal in the sense that it contributes to the conservation of nature in both the species and the individual. But in man, it is more natural that sensuality submit to reason than that it be followed spontaneously. If one can say that human nature has three “gears”—first is substantial self-preservation, second is sensuality, and third is rationality—then contemporary Thomists who speak of reason in opposition to nature are, as it were, stuck in second gear.

In “third gear,” man sees and is obliged to pursue a new level of possibilities and exigencies of nature—namely, the virtues as a “roadmap” to the happiness proper to a rational creature. At this level, there is for man a pre-fixed template of virtues, prescriptions, and proscriptions, but only up to a point. But each man may find that there are many routes he may take to achieve his good as a rational creature, so long as he stays on the roads on the map. There are also many ways to stray from these mapped-out roads—i.e., to depart from the order of reason—but they all involve a basic error about what is good for man. The man who sins misunderstands, whether ignorantly or culpably, his nature:

174 *ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 6, ad 3 [Leon. 7.158]: “exit rationis ordinem.”
all do not think themselves to be what they are. For the reasoning mind is the predominant part of man, while the sensitive and corporeal nature takes the second place. Now the good look upon their rational nature as being the chief thing in them, wherefore in this way they think themselves to be what they are. On the other hand, the wicked reckon their sensitive and corporeal nature to hold the first place. Wherefore, since they know not themselves aright, they do not love themselves aright, but love what they think themselves to be. But the good know themselves truly, and therefore truly love themselves.\textsuperscript{175}

Sin is unnatural for man because it involves a failure of the rule of reason, which rule accords with man’s true nature.\textsuperscript{176} Even where the sensitive appetite—e.g., for food—is in itself natural, sin enters when this appetite is not governed according to man’s higher nature. Even if man acts maliciously due to the natural inclination of the sensitive part of his nature, this sinful malice is nevertheless not natural “on the part of his intellectual nature.”\textsuperscript{177}

Furthermore, sin is unnatural in that the will naturally inclines to rational good. If a man willfully chooses evil, this choice as evil is caused by something other than the natural inclination of the will as nature.\textsuperscript{178}

Without virtue, the lower appetites do not readily obey reason. Taking an image from Aristotle’s \textit{Politics}, St. Thomas says that reason must rule the lower appetites according to a certain “royal and political governance,” that is, “as kings and princes rule free men who

\textsuperscript{175} \textit{ST} II-II, q. 25, a. 7 [Leon. 8.203]: “non omnes aestimant se esse id quod sunt. Principale enim in homine est mens rationalis, secundarium autem est natura sensitiva et corporalis . . . . Boni autem aestimant principale in seipsis rationalem naturam . . . unde secundum hoc aestimant se esse quod sunt. Mali autem aestimant principale in seipsis naturam sensitivam et corporalem . . . . Unde non recte cognoscentes seipsos, non vere diligunt seipsos, sed diligunt id quod seipsos esse reputant. Boni autem, vere cognoscentes seipsos, vere seipsos diligunt.”

\textsuperscript{176} See \textit{ST} I-II, q. 75, a. 2, ad 3: “illud quod est causa peccati sicut potentia producens actum, est naturale. Motus etiam sensitivae partis, ex quo sequitur peccatum, interdum est naturalis, sicut cum propter appetitum cibi aliquis peccat. Sed efficitur peccatum innaturale ex hoc ipso quod deficit regula naturalis, quam homo secundum naturam suam debet attendere.”

\textsuperscript{177} \textit{ST} I, q. 63, a. 4, ad 2 [Leon. 5.129]: “ex parte naturae intellectualis.”

\textsuperscript{178} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 78, a. 3 [Leon. 6.73-74]: “voluntas aliter se habet ad bonum, et aliter ad malum. Ex natura enim suae potentiae inclinatur ad bonum rationis, sicut ad proprium obiectum, unde et omne peccatum dicitur esse contra naturam.”
have the right and capacity to resist to some degree the commands of king or prince.”

Accordingly, “there is need for something whereby the activity that reason commands be accomplished without resistance.” That something is virtue, which brings a certain peace in the realm of reason’s governance, for peace is “the union of the appetites’ inclinations.”

2. The Content of Rational Order

It is correct to say that reason is itself natural and that its natural inclination is to order and govern the lower inclinations. But by what standard does reason govern well? A couple of points regarding naturally known goods and the natural order among them must suffice.

First, St. Thomas says, in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, that “all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance.” Reason knows that certain things are good or bad from man’s many natural inclinations. For example, life, children and their education, social life and knowledge, and worship of God are all good.

Correspondingly, suicide, murder, bodily injury, ignorance, offending others and the like are bad. According to these natural inclinations reason can see a certain baseline for what is

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179 De virt. comm., a. 4 [Marietti 717]: “ratio vero dominatur inferioribus animae partibus regali et politico principatu, id est sicut reges et principes civitatum dominantur liberis, qui habent ius et facultatem repugnandi quantum ad aliqua praecepta regis vel principis. In membro igitur exteriori non est necessarium aliquid perfectivum actus humani, nisi naturalis eius dispositio, per quam natum est moveri a ratione.”

180 Ibid.: “Nam membro exterius ad nutum obedit superiori imperanti absque ulla repugnantia secundum naturae ordinem, nisi sit impedimentum aliquod; ut patet in manu et pede. . . . [A]nima dominatur corpori dispostico principatu, sicut dominus servo, qui non habet facultatem resistendi in aliquo imperio domini.”

good. *Ab initio*, reason need not construct or dictate the notion that, say, parents should love their children.

The second point is that there is a natural hierarchical order of goods. In modern thought there is a horror of hierarchy, which affects certain Thomists. Finnis characterizes the threefold order of the natural inclinations as an irrelevant “metaphysical schema.”182 As we have seen, we can say that a man’s “natural inclinations” can come into conflict with each other, but only if “natural inclinations” is understood in the abstract to describe what each part or power of human nature, left to itself, would incline towards. There are situations in which acts of self-sacrifice or killing or harming another in self-defense are good, even though they seem to violate man’s natural inclinations to bodily self-preservation and sociability. This is not the place to explain the casuistry of moral action; the important point here is that the good proper to man at each “level” of his nature—e.g., as substance (self-preservation) or as animal (sexual activity and eating)—is a default. It is not trumped simply because practical reason declares that one’s “life plan” requires, for example, self-immolation; rather, it is trumped only where a higher good overrides it. In many cases, the conflict is resolved by a certain limiting or channeling. Temperance with regard to food and drink is at odds with man’s sensitive nature considered in the abstract, inasmuch as the

182 The reason for this rejection of hierarchy on the part of the Finnis-Grisez “new natural law” school is not a rejection of tradition but instead a tactical concern to refute utilitarian ethics. Finnis and his followers are at pains to show that the basic goods are at bottom incommensurable because their principle antagonists are utilitarian “teleological ethics” (the telos being a maximization of happiness or pleasure). The action that serves the “higher” good in a given situation is simply whichever action yields “the most” happiness. If all goods were commensurable, i.e., reducible to a common measure, then the utilitarian doctrine of a felicific calculus of happiness would be more persuasive as against natural law doctrine. For a good introduction to the New Natural Law position in the context of bioethics, see Robert George and Christopher Tollefsen. *Embryo: A Defense of Human Life* (New York: Doubleday, 2008). For an explanation of why Thomas’s hierarchical natural law does not entail the utilitarian error, see Ralph McInerny, *Ethica Thomistica* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1997).
sensitive appetite’s inclination is to the common good of the animal (as both individual and species) and it is natural to the sensitive appetite to seek the pleasures of food and drink. But temperance is nevertheless natural to man as a rational being. He must curb his lower appetite, but he need not eliminate it (which would, in any event, contradict his substantial inclination to self-preservation because he would starve to death). The more difficult cases arise when the pursuit of one natural inclination puts one’s very life or health at risk. A parent readily risks his life and health to protect his children; and the good citizen, according to his higher natural inclination, is willing to sacrifice his life for the protection of the city. Without addressing the “procedure” for how a man correctly decides to risk his life, suffice it to say that, in some sense—pace Finnis et al.—the higher goods do take precedence over the lower goods.

3. Man’s Properly Rational Natural Inclinations

In an effort to show that reason is natural, there is a temptation to emphasize the ordering or governing function of reason as the importantly natural aspect of reason. But if reason’s role is limited to a procedural or administrative function—even if we call this natural—the result is another variation of the nature-reason dichotomy under the guise of, as it were, nature\(_1\) (nature to be ordered) vs. nature\(_2\) (ordering nature). It is equally, or more, important to examine the natural inclinations that are proper to man as rational. These properly rational natural inclinations correspond to the third layer of the natural inclinations.

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\(^{183}\) See ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3, ad 1 [Leon. 7.171] (“temperantia est circa concupiscientias naturales cibi et potus et venereorum, quae quidem ordinantur ad bonum commune naturae, sicut et alia legalia ordinantur ad bonum commune morale”); and ST II-II, q. 141, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 10.122] (“natura inclinat in id quod est convenientis unicum”).

\(^{184}\) To extend the analogy, reason-nature becomes a sort of \textit{natura naturans} with respect to the rest of human nature seen as \textit{natura naturata}.
in the three-fold schema of q. 94, a. 2. These are the natural inclinations that most clearly
give the lie to the modern truncated notion of natural inclination.

Throughout the corpus of St. Thomas’s works, there are scores of texts describing the
inclinations of man’s rational nature to certain ends and operations. The most often cited of
these texts pertain to man’s natural inclinations to two overarching ends of human life: to live
in society and to know the truth about God, each of which corresponds to a common good,
i.e., a political common good and the common good of all creatures, God. Elsewhere,
pertaining to man’s social and political nature, he speaks of natural inclinations to, for
example, the love of all men, the “civil good” of man, action in accord with the *ius gentium*
(including keeping agreements and protecting enemy legates), and exposing oneself to
danger for the sake of the common good. Man is also naturally inclined to avoid certain
things that are at odds with social life, such as offending others (q. 94, a. 2) or harming others
(q. 94, a. 5, ad 3). Man is also naturally inclined to the “secondary,” rational end of marriage
(*mutuum obsequium*).\(^{185}\) Beyond the social and political, man is naturally inclined to
happiness, to his ultimate (although connatural) end, to knowledge and contemplation of
truth in general, and to the love of God more than himself.\(^{186}\)

St. Thomas also sometimes refers to certain other natural inclinations pertaining to
man’s natural faculties. He says man is naturally inclined to act in accord with reason, which
is, he says, to act in accord with virtue, “since the rational soul is the proper form of man,
there is in every man a natural inclination to act according to reason: and this is to act

\(^{185}\) *In IV Sent.*, d. 26, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1 [Parma 7/2.918].

\(^{186}\) *Quodlibet* I, q. 4 a. 3 [Leon. 25/2.188-89:58-82] (natural inclination to love God more than oneself).
According to virtue. As explained in Chapter IV, although some men (from bodily complexion) have a stronger natural inclination to this or that virtue, all men (from the human form) have a natural inclination to virtue in general and to each of the virtues in particular. Consequently, “all acts of virtue are prescribed by the natural law, since each one’s reason naturally dictates to him to act virtuously.” In legal terms, man is naturally inclined to do what is in accord with the eternal law.

Apart from man’s natural inclinations to love and know the truth about God, the natural inclinations that pertain to the virtue of religion provide striking illustrations of how far natural inclination exceeds the merely animal urges associated with modern “nature.” Man is naturally inclined to confess his sins (in the right way, to the right person, and at the right time) and to keep the sabbath for purposes of spiritual refreshment. The natural inclination to honor and submit to God is not a bodily or “psychological” urge that must be ordered by reason “from the outside.” Rather, this inclination, as natural, flows from an order already given in the nature of the rational creature: “Natural reason tells man that he is subject (subditus) to a higher being, on account of the defects (defectus) which he perceives in himself, and in which he needs help and direction from someone above him . . .” By “defects,” Aquinas means the natural tendencies of the human body considered as a body.

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187 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.171]: “cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis, naturalis inclinatio inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem. Et hoc est agere secundum virtutem.”
188 Ibid.: “Unde secundum hoc, omnes actus virtutum sunt de lege naturali, dictat enim hoc naturaliter unicuique propria ratio, ut virtuose agat.” See also ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.154]; q. 94, a. 4 [Leon. 7.171].
189 ST I-II, q. 93, a. 6 [Leon. 7.166-7].
190 In IV Sent., d. 17, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, ad 1 [Moos 4.897]; ST II-II, q. 122, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 9.478].
191 ST II-II, q. 85, a. 1 [Leon. 9.215-16]: “naturalis ratio dictat homini quod aliqui superiori subjatur, propter defectus quos in seipsum sentit, in quibus ab aliquo superiori egent adiuvari et dirigiri.”
192 “[D]eath and other defects of nature” are intrinsic propensities of material things to corruption, not necessarily wounds of original sin. ST I-II, q. 42, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 6.277]. Death and corruption are “natural” only in the sense of the natural inclination of matter; they are contrary to the natural inclination of man’s form.
The distinction between natural inclination to offer sacrifice and the particular “signs” involved in a given sacrificial ritual corresponds to the distinction between, on one hand, the order that “reason considers, but does not make” and the order that “reason establishes in its own act of consideration” by ordering concepts and signs corresponding to those concepts.  

4. Rational Order as Manifold for Prudence

There is a pre-given, natural order in man’s rational nature. This order is not limited to bodily functions and structures (though the things of the body have an important place in natural law morality). The order of reason is not a purely practical ordering foisted upon a field of brute, otherwise sinful or blind natural inclinations of the several parts and powers of man. The dead weight of modern reductionist, non-teleological, physical-material and primitivist notions of nature obscures the luminous realm of rational order in man. 

To acknowledge that there is a rational order given in human nature is not the same as saying that reason’s only task is to record that order and implement it in a purely ministerial way in every situation. Jan Aertsen is not incorrect to warn that “human good does not simply lie in the ends of the natural inclinations.”  But the work proper to reason is carried out within the manifold of natural, already rational order. That work is the work of prudence. The “right ends of life are fixed,” and there is a rich, luminously reticulated landscape of humanly natural order which comprises, inter alia, the virtues, political justice, and the order of man to God. These natural things belong to the order “which reason considers but does not

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ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116]. It is also natural (in the properly human sense) for man to use reason and artifice to supply the defects of his own bodily nature. For example, man uses clothing to supplement the “defect” of having bare skin. See In I Cor. [rep. Reg.], cap. 11, vs. 5. Defectus might be better translated “deficiencies.”

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193 In I Ethic., lect. 1, n. 1 [Leon. 47/1.4:16-18]: “ratio non facit, sed solum considerat . . . ratio considerando facit in proprio actu.” Sacrifice may also be an example of the order reason makes in external things: “est ordo quem ratio considerando facit in exterioribus rebus, quarum ipsa est causa.” Ibid.  

make.”¹⁹⁵ The order of prudence—the order “that reason in deliberating establishes in the operations of the will”—is incremental to, bounded by the pre-given, natural order of human nature.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ In I Ethic., lect. 1, n. 1 [Leon. 47/1.4:16-17]: “ordo quem ratio non facit, sed solum considerat.”
¹⁹⁶ Ibid.: “quem ratio considerando facit in operationibus voluntatis.”
Are all inclinations natural inclinations? Natural law scholars sometimes refer to the natural inclinations as simply “the inclinations,” as if all the observed inclinations of human beings were equally natural or, properly speaking, human. However, for St. Thomas, the term “natural inclination” in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 does not include every human inclination. As noted in Chapter I, there are many kinds of inclination, including those of passion, habit, grace, and violence, that are different from what St. Thomas means by “natural inclinations.” This chapter focuses on the inclinations associated with the various levels of “appetite” (*appetitus*). Whether a particular “appetitive inclination” is a natural inclination depends upon which kind of appetite St. Thomas is referring to. As we shall see, the inclinations of certain appetites comprise a subset of human inclinations that are especially likely to be confused with human natural inclinations—a confusion which is fatal to a correct understanding of *inclinatio naturalis* in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

St. Thomas frequently uses inclination language in connection with discussions of *appetitus*. But what does he mean by *appetitus* and how is it related to natural inclination? This question is important because, if natural inclination simply means any inclination of

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1 See, e.g., John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, 91.

2 To recapitulate, every inclination of whatever sort is natural in a certain respect inasmuch as it is “reducible,” i.e., attributable in the order of causality, to nature as a principle. Inclinations of passion and habit are “natural” inasmuch as they are operations of the powers of a nature. An inclination of violence is traceable to some natural cause in the order of universal causality, though the principle of such inclination is some agent exterior to the thing violently inclined. An inclination of grace is natural only inasmuch as it involves the “cooperation” as it were of some natural faculty of man. But these inclinations are “natural” in a secondary way. They are not the “ontological” inclinations that follow, at the level of nature, from natural form.
man whatsoever, then it becomes impossible to understand what St. Thomas means when he says the precepts of the natural law follow upon the order of the natural inclinations. If the \textit{inclinatio}nes \textit{naturales} are simply all human inclinations, then the term \textit{naturalis} ceases to provide any guidance with respect to natural law and it is left to practical reason—understood as something apart from nature—to provide all the moral order in the (erstwhile natural) law.

Hutcheson, in the epigraph above, refers to “appetite” (and by implication \textit{appetitus}) as referring to the higher powers.\textsuperscript{3} But St. Thomas uses the term \textit{appetitus} in both senses. More precisely, he describes three types of appetite: natural, sensitive, and rational, as I explain below. Although he frequently uses the term \textit{appetitus} \textit{naturalis} with respect to irrational creatures to distinguish natural appetite from the higher appetites proper to man, he also identifies a natural appetite in man. In the question on whether there is a natural law (\textit{ST} I-II, q. 91, a. 2), St. Thomas considers this objection: “the directing of human acts to their end is not a function of nature, as is the case in irrational creatures, which act for an end solely by their natural appetite; whereas man acts for an end by his reason and will.”\textsuperscript{4} His response makes clear that there is a natural appetite proper to man: “Every act of reason and will in us is based on that which is according to nature . . . for every act of reasoning is based on principles that are known naturally, and every act of appetite in respect of the means is derived from the natural appetite in respect of the last end.”\textsuperscript{5}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{3} Francis Hutcheson, \textit{A System of Moral Philosophy}, vol. 1 (Glasgow: R. and A. Foulis, 1755), 9n.
\textsuperscript{4} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 91, a. 2, arg. 2 [Leon. 7.154]: “\textit{per legem ordinatur homo in suis actibus ad finem, ut supra habitum est. Sed ordinatio humanorum actuum ad finem non est per naturam, sicut accidit in creaturis irrationabilibus, quae solo appetitu naturali agunt propter finem, sed agit homo propter finem per rationem et voluntatem. Ergo non est aliqua lex homini naturalis.”}
\textsuperscript{5} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 91, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.154]: “\textit{omnis operatio, rationis et voluntatis derivatur in nobis ab eo quod est secundum naturam . . . nam omnis ratiocinatio derivatur a principiis naturaliter notis, et omnis appetitus eorum quae sunt ad finem, derivatur a naturali appetitu ultimi finis.”}
\end{footnotesize}
But what precisely is this human natural appetite and how does it relate to natural inclination? My concern in this chapter is to examine how natural inclination is related to various grades of appetite: namely the natural, sensitive, and rational appetites. Is natural inclination the same as natural appetite? If so, how are natural inclinations related to the higher appetites? Finally, are the natural inclinations referred to in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 present in man’s nature prior to apprehension or do such natural inclinations come about only upon apprehension of particular goods by human reason?

This chapter attempts to answer these questions as follows. Section A investigates St. Thomas’s use of inclinatio naturalis as a synonym for appetitus naturalis and distinguishes the inclinations of natural appetite from other human inclinations—i.e., those of the sensitive and rational appetites. Section B show that the operations of the higher appetites nevertheless presuppose, and are rooted in, natural appetite. Finally, section C argues that, contrary to Stephen Brock’s claim that the natural inclinations referred to in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 are inclinations of the rational appetite which follow upon human reason’s apprehension of particular goods, Aquinas’s term inclinatio naturalis in this context is consistent with his general doctrine that natural inclinations are distinct from the inclinations of man’s higher appetites and prior to any cognition on the part of man.

A. Natural Inclination Distinguished From Higher Appetites.

The following examination of St. Thomas’s use of the term inclinatio naturalis in relation to the various levels of appetitus shows that inclinatio naturalis follows upon natural form, not received form (whether sensible or intelligible). Accordingly, natural inclination is
prior to the higher appetites and, unlike the higher appetites, does not follow upon the creature’s own cognition.

1. Appetitus naturalis and inclinatio naturalis

Jorge LaPorta rightly calls appetitus a “dangerous word.” In the natural law context, one danger is that natural appetite can be confused with other kinds of human appetite and, correspondingly, natural inclination can be confused with other human inclinations. Appetitus and inclinatio have different meanings from one another in different contexts. As explained in Chapter I, inclinatio and inclinare have a two-fold extrinsic-intrinsic meaning which appetitus and appetere lacks. The appetite in a thing is not “appetited” by another thing. Yet St. Thomas sometimes uses the terms appetitus and inclinatio interchangeably—e.g., “an appetite is nothing other than a certain inclination toward something on the part of what has

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6 Jorge LaPorta, “Pour trouver le sens exact des termes: ‘appetitus naturalis’, ‘desiderium naturale’, ‘amor naturalis’ etc. chez Thomas d’Aquin,” Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge 40 (1973): 40: “L’expression ‘l’appétit’ est dangereuse.” Perhaps LaPorta was influenced by C. S. Lewis’s notion of the “dangerous senses” of words, as discussed in the Introduction.

7 Gianmarco Stancato argues that inclinatio pertains to the substantial form, whereas appetitus refers to the faculty of the being. Stancato, Le concept de désir, 148. But Thomas uses both terms in an ontological sense with respect to nature, as I argue below. Natural appetite is not limited to, say, the sensitive appetite.

8 As explained in Chapter I, inclinatio denotes a bending or leaning, or, tropologically, a disposition. Inclinare can be either transitive or intransitive. Inclinatio is broader than appetitus in that inclinatio carries the dual sense of a tending from within and a direction from without. By contrast, the noun appetitus (also adpetitus) means “a passionate, eager longing or desire” for something, or the “power or faculty of [such] desire.” See, e.g., De ver., q. 22, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.613:191-93]: “Appetere nihil aliud quam aliquid petere, quasi tendere in aliquid ad ipsum ordinatum.” Appetere is only transitive only in its physical sense of “attack or assault.” In its tropological sense of striving or desiring, there is an object of the striving, but the word refers to the striving of the striver, not to an action done to the thing sought. See Lewis & Short, s.v. “appetere,” “Trop., to strive after earnestly, to desire eagerly, to long for,” e.g., Cic. Fin. 5.20.55: “ut adpetat animum agere semper aliquid.” Lewis & Short, s.v. “appetitus” (n.): “The power or faculty of desire: duplex est vis animorum atque naturae: una pars in adpetitu posita est, quae est ὁρµή Graece, quae hominem huc atque illuc rapit, altera in ratione etc., Cic. Off. 1, 28, 101.” On Thomas’s etymology of appetitus, see Gustaf J. Gustafson, The Theory of Natural Appetency in the Philosophy of St. Thomas (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1944), 68-69.

9 Even in the “literal,” classical sense of appetere as “attack, assault,” which is transitive, the “attacking” only goes in one direction: the thing attacked, being attacked, does not then somehow attack from within in the way that a natural thing, being inclined by God, then itself inclines (i.e., toward the end that God has conceived). See Lewis & Short, s.v. “appetere.” The English verb, “apetith,” long obsolete, is intransitive. See, e.g., Chaucer, Legend of Good Women (1385) “As matier apetith forme alwey.”
the appetite.” The philosophical extensions of the two terms seem to thus overlap to the degree they both refer to an internal inclination of a thing towards something. This overlap is present in an important way where the two terms are used in reference to nature. That is, to the extent inclinatio naturalis is understood in an intrinsic sense (the thing tending from within), it is synonymous with appetitus naturalis (likewise an internal tending or striving).

In this sense, Gustaf Gustafson is correct that St. Thomas “generally uses as synonymous” the terms appetitus naturalis and inclinatio naturalis. For example, he says natural inclination “is” (or “is called”) natural appetite. In reverse, natural appetite or “is” (or “is nothing but”) natural inclination. In most of these cases, the nature in question is that of the species (as opposed to the bodily nature of an individual). In many cases, he uses the term appetitus

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10 ST I-II, q. 8, a. 1 [Leon. 6.68]: “appetitus nihil aliud est quam inclinatio appetentis in aliquid.”

11 Gustaf Gustafson, Natural Appetency, 12.

naturalis with respect to irrational natures in contrast to human will, but he also applies the term to rational nature: the natural appetite of man to his ultimate end.13

2. Natural appetite is analogous to, but distinct from, sensitive and rational appetites

St. Thomas uses the terms appetitus and inclinatio analogously to refer to several different levels of appetite. Not every appetite is a natural appetite; nor is every inclination a natural inclination, but there is a ratio communis linking all levels of appetite: inclination. That is, as St. Thomas writes, “Appetite is nothing other than the inclination of the striving thing [appetentis] towards something.”14 In the case of the higher appetites, the act of an appetitive power is a certain inclination to something, but these higher inclinations are not the same as natural inclinations.15 Natural appetite is distinct from, although analogous to, the higher, “psychological” appetites—i.e., the sensitive and rational appetites. Every being, inasmuch as it stands in a natural order in relation to an object necessary for its natural perfection, has natural appetite. Every appetite, in other words, is an appetite for something which a creature needs to reach its natural end in a teleological order.16 Even so, natural

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13 In things that lack apprehension (such as a heavy body), natural desire results “ex sola inclinatione naturalium principiorum, quae naturalis appetitus in quibusdam dicitur.” SCG II, cap. 55, n. 13 [Leon. 13.395]. See also SCG III, cap. 88, n. 4 [Leon. 14.269] (“Sicut in re inanimata se habet inclinatio naturalis ad propiam finem, quae et appetitus naturalis dicitur”); SCG IV, cap. 19, n. 3 [Leon. 15.74] (“Voluntas enim . . . sic se habet in rebus intellectualibus sicut naturalis inclinatio in rebus naturalibus, quae et naturalis appetitus dicitur”); De carit., a. 1 [Marietti 755] (“sicut inclinatio naturalis in rebus naturalibus appetitus naturalis nominatur, ita in rationalibus inclinatio apprehensionem intellectus sequens, actus voluntatis est.”). For natural appetite in man, see, e.g., ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.154] (natural appetite of man for his ultimate end).

14 ST I-II, q. 8, a. 1 [Leon. 6.68]: “Appetitus nihil est aliud quam inclinatio appetentis in aliquid.”

15 ST I-II, q. 15, a. 1: “actus appetitivae virtutis est quaedam inclinatio ad rem ipsam.” Although the inclinations of the appetitive powers are “superior” to the inclinations of natural appetite, Thomas uses the term inclinatio with reference to appetite at all levels. ST I, q. 80, a. 1 [Leon. 5.282] (“superior inclinatione pertinet ad vim animae appetitivam, per quam animal appetere potest ea quae apprehendit, non solum ea ad quae inclinatione forma naturali. Sic igitur nesse est ponere aliquam potentiam animae appetitivam”); ST II-II, q. 175, a. 1 [Leon. 10.402] (“Confert autem unumquodque ad id in quod tendit secundum proprium inclinationem, vel voluntariam vel naturalem”).

16 See In I Phys., lect. 15, n. 8: “Appetitus autem omnis est propter indigentiam quia est non habiti.” See also Gustafson, Natural Appetency, 69.
appetite is also found in every grade of being and, in turn, the sensitive and rational appetites are based on natural appetite. As Gustafson explains,

\[\text{Appetitus naturalis} \text{ is related to being as such. . . . When we consider appetitus in this sense, therefore, we are taking it in its simplest comprehension, or if you like, in its widest extension, where it has relevance in the whole range of reality. It is, therefore, analogical and transcendental, as is being itself; and, in this way, St. Thomas defines it most generally as nothing but an inclination on the part of any being towards that to which it is ordained.}\]

But animals and man have, in addition to natural appetite, some higher appetite.\(^{17}\) \textit{Appetitus naturalis} means any appetite that is not consequent on cognition, such as the natural inclination of a stone to fall toward the center of the earth. All three levels of appetite are present in man: natural appetite, sensitive appetite (also called “animal appetite”), and rational appetite (i.e., will).

At first glance, this triad of appetites seems to correspond to the three levels of natural inclination of man that St. Thomas describes in q. 94, a. 2, but it is important to recognize that man’s natural appetite spans all three levels. Not only does he have a natural appetite for self-preservation in common with all substances (tier one); he also has a natural appetite for the things he has in common with all animals (tier two) and for the things proper to him as a rational creature (tier three).\(^{18}\)

\textbf{a. Higher appetites analogous to natural appetite}

St. Thomas frequently analogizes natural inclination or natural appetite to the higher appetites. The common element in the analogy is form. It is axiomatic for St. Thomas that

\(^{17}\) \textit{De ver.}, q. 23, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.653:135-40]: “Et quia cuiuslibet rei tam materialis quam immaterialis est ad rem aliam ordinem habere; inde est quod cuiuslibet rei competit habere appetitum vel naturalem, vel animalem, vel rationalem seu intellectualem; sed in diversis diversimodo invenitur.” \textit{ST} I, q. 59, a. 1 [Leon. 5.92] (plants and inanimates); \textit{In De div. nom.}, cap. 4, lect. 3, n. 318 [Marietti 104] (natural inclination of plants). See below for discussion of sensitive and rational appetites.

\(^{18}\) See, e.g., \textit{Quodlibet IV}, q. 11, a. 1 [Leon. 25/2.342:24-27] (natural appetite of man’s vegetative powers); \textit{De malo}, q. 14, a. 1, ad 4 (man’s natural appetite for food in both appetitive and vegetative powers); \textit{ST} I-II, q. 91, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.154] (natural appetite of man for his ultimate end).
“some inclination follows upon every form,” as discussed in Chapter VII. Thus an inclination follows on any form, whether natural, sensible, or intelligible. Correspondingly, the three levels of appetite are distinguished according to the type of form at each level:

[Just as a thing has a natural inclination toward something, and has movement and action in order to pursue that toward which it is inclined through its natural form, so also does the inclination toward a thing apprehended by sense or by intellect, follow upon the apprehension of a sensible or intelligible form. This inclination belongs to the appetitive power.]

Appetitive motions “are likened to natural appetite” because, at each level of appetite, the final cause of any appetitive motion is the end or object of the motion—the thing towards which a thing is inclined. But the principle of any such motion is the “interior inclination of appetite”—whether that inclination be a natural inclination (e.g., the heaviness of a stone) or an inclination of an appetitive power elicited by apprehension of some good or evil (e.g., sorrow upon perceiving a present evil).

The inclinations of animal appetite in particular are analogous to the inclinations of natural appetite. Like natural motions, animal motions proceed from an inclination, i.e.,

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19 ST I, q. 80, a. 1 [Leon. 5.282]: “quamlibet formam sequitur aliqua inclinatio.” On form and inclination, see Chapter VII.

20 Q. d. de anima, q. 13 [Leon. 24/1.117:232-37]: “Sicut autem per formam naturalem res habet inclinationem ad aliquid, et habet motum aut actionem ad consequendum id ad quod inclinatur; ita ad formam etiam sensibilem vel intelligibilem sequitur inclinatio ad rem sive per sensum sive per intellectum comprehensam; quae quidem pertinet ad potentiam appetitivam.” Cf. De malo, q. 6 [Leon. 23.148:277-81] (“sicut in rebus naturalibus inventitur forma, quae est principium actionis, et inclinatio consequens formam, quae dicitur appetitus naturalis, ex quibus sequitur actio; ita in homine inventitur forma intellectiva, et inclinatio voluntatis consequens formas apprehensam, ex quibus sequitur exterior actio.”); In III Sent., d. 27, q. 1, a. 2 [Moos 3.860-61]; ST I-II, q. 36, a. 2; ST I-II, q. 37, a. 2.

21 ST I-II, q. 36, a. 2: “Motus autem appetitivus habet . . . similitudinem appetitus naturalis. Cuius duplex causa assignari potest, una per modum finis; alia sicut unde est principium motus. Sicut descendionis corporis gravis causa sicut finis, est locus deorsum, principium autem motus est inclinatio naturalis, quae est ex gravitate. Causa autem motus appetitivi per modum finis, est eius objectum. [S]ic . . . causa doloris seu tristitiae est malum coniunctum. Causa autem sicut unde est principium talis motus, est interior inclinatio appetitus.” Cf. ST I-II, q. 36, a. 4.
“animal inclination, which is animal appetite.”22 Here again, appetite follows form: “As
the natural desire or inclination follows the form naturally inherent, so the animal desire
follows the perceived form.”23 At the level of rational appetite, the inclination of the will is
also analogous to natural inclination: “the act of the will is nothing other than a certain
inclination of the will toward the thing willed, as likewise natural appetite is nothing other
than the inclination of nature toward something.”24 As the natural inclination follows upon
natural form, so the voluntary follows upon intellectually apprehended form.25 Both natural
and voluntary inclinations proceed from an interior principle.26 Both natural and voluntary
inclinations “come to rest” when the end has been reached.27

b. Natural appetite is distinct from the higher appetites

Although the higher appetites are analogous to natural appetite, they are not the same
thing as natural appetite. St. Thomas distinguishes, that is, between natural inclinations and

22 Cf. De spe, a. 3 [Marietti 808]: “motus naturalis ex inclinatione naturali procedit, quae dicitur
appetitus naturalis; et similiter motus affectionum animalium procedunt ex inclinatione animalis, quae est
appetitus animalis.”
23 In III Ethic., lect. 13, n. 1 [47/1.156:9-12]: “Sicut enim appetitus seu inclinatio naturalis, sequitur
formam naturaliter inhaerentem, ita appetitus animalis sequitur formam apprehensam.”
24 De malo, q. 3, a. 3 [Leon. 23.73:221-24]: “actus voluntatis nihil est aliud quam inclinatio quaedam
voluntatis in volitum, sicut et appetitus naturalis nihil est aliud quam inclinatio naturae ad aliquid.” Cf. ST I, q.
82, a. 1 [Leon. 5.293] (“sic dicitur aliquid naturae quia est secundum inclinationem naturae, ita dicitur aliquid
voluntarium quia est secundum inclinationem voluntatis.”); ST I-II, q. 1, a. 2 (“Haec . . . determinatio, sicut in
rationali natura fit per rationalem appetitum, qui dicitur voluntas; ita in aliis fit per inclinationem naturalem,
quae dicitur appetitus naturalis.”); ST I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 6.60] (“sicut naturale dicitur quod est
secundum inclinationem naturae, ita voluntarium dicitur quod est secundum inclinationem voluntatis.”); In V
Meta., lect. 6, n. 829 [Marietti 270] (“In naturalibus quidem est impetus, sive inclinatio ad aliquem finem, cui
respondet voluntas in natura rationali”); SCG IV, cap. 19, n. 2 [Leon. 15.74].
25 ST I, q. 87, a. 4 [Leon. 5.363]: “actus voluntatis nihil aliud est quam inclinatio quaedam consequens
formam intellectam, sicut appetitus naturalis est inclinatio consequens formam naturalem.”
26 ST I-II, q. 6, a. 4: “actus voluntatis nihil aliud est quam inclinatio quaedam procedens ab interiori
principio cognoscente, sicut appetitus naturalis est quaedam inclinatio ab interiori principio et sine cognitione.”
Cf. SCG I, cap. 68, n. 6 [Leon. 13.199]: “Cum . . . cogitatio animae sit per informationem quandam ipsius;
affectio autem sit quaedam inclinationem ipsius ad aliquid, nam et ipsam inclinationem rei naturalis appetitum
naturalem dicimus.”
27 SCG III, cap. 26, n. 15 [Leon. 14.72]: “Sicut autem homo per voluntatem inclinatur in finem et
quietatur in illo, ita corpora naturalia habent inclinationes naturales in fines proprios, quae quidem quietantur
fine iam adepto.”
the inclinations of the appetitive powers. It is especially important to grasp this
distinction in order to avoid confusion between man’s natural inclinations and the particular
inclinations of mere passion and appetite. The natural inclination follows upon natural form,
while the inclinations of the sensitive and rational appetites follow upon forms apprehended
by sense perception or intellection.²⁸ Strictly speaking, as is discussed in Chapter VII, all
inclinations presuppose apprehension by someone. But, in the case of natural appetite, how
can there be knowledge “in,” that is, “on the part of,” the thing? The answer is that
knowledge does underlie natural appetite, but it is not the knowledge of the seeking subject
itself. Natural inclination requires only apprehension by an “other”—i.e., by God, who gave
the thing its natural form: “the inclination of the natural appetite is not consequent upon the
apprehension of the seeking thing [appetentis] itself, but of another.”²⁹ Natural appetite in
man requires no apprehension by man. For St. Thomas, natural appetite presupposes only
God’s apprehension, not man’s. The intention of the divine intellect, which “backs up” nature
in a way that makes clear that natural finality is real. For St. Thomas, to say “nature inclines
towards an end” is not mere metaphor or naïve anthropomorphism. In contrast to natural
appetite, the higher appetites arise, not from God’s apprehension, but “from an apprehension
in the subject of the appetite.”³⁰ In any event, the distinguishing factor between natural

²⁸ ST I, q. 80, a. 1 [Leon. 5.282].
²⁹ ST I-II, q. 35, a. 1: “inclinatio appetitus naturalis non consequitur apprehensionem ipsius appetentis, sed alterius.”
³⁰ ST I-II, q. 26, a. 1: “secundum differentiam appetitus est differentia amoris. Est enim quidam appetitus non consequens apprehensionem ipsius appetentis, sed alterius, et huiusmodi dicitur appetitus naturalis. Res enim naturales appetunt quod eis convenit secundum suam naturam, non per apprehensionem propriam, sed per apprehensionem instituens naturam.” The “higher” appetites are superior to the natural
appetite in the sense that they are receptive of the species of other things and, in effect, more like God. ST I, q. 80, a. 1 [Leon. 5.282]. Natural appetite, which is “nothing more than natural inclination,” is the “most
imperfect” appetite because it does not involve cognition on the part of the natural thing. In De div. nom., cap. 4, lect. 9, n. 402 [Marietti 134]: “Est autem imperfectissimus appetitum, naturalis appetitus absque cognitione,
appetite and higher appetite is whether the appetite follows upon the creature’s own cognition.

Natural appetite is “ontological,” not “psychological,” to use those terms in the manner defined in the Introduction. The higher appetites are psychological in that they involve a motion of the soul consequent upon cognition. Natural appetite is not a motion or operation of the thing’s faculties that requires apprehension in the thing. It does not involve apprehension on the part of any soul. It is, instead, an ordination of the thing itself, which presupposes only the Divine apprehension, as St. Thomas repeatedly makes clear:

Natural appetite . . . does not follow any apprehension, as animal and intellectual appetite do.\(^{31}\)

Natural appetite tends to the appetible thing itself without any apprehension of the reason for its appetibility; for natural appetite is nothing but an inclination and ordination of the thing to something else which is in keeping with it, like the ordination of a stone to a place below. But this apprehension pre-exists in the one who institutes nature, who gives each nature the proper inclination fitting to itself.\(^{32}\)

Natural appetite is nothing else than an ordination of certain things to their end according to their proper nature.\(^{33}\)

Some creatures, those which lack cognition entirely, have only natural appetite.

Plants, for example, although they lack cognition, nevertheless “desire the divine Good by a

\(^{31}\) ST I-II, q. 17, a. 8 [Leon. 6.124]: “Appetitus . . . naturalis non consequitur aliquam apprehensionem, sicut sequitur appetitus animalis et intellectualis.”

\(^{32}\) De ver., q. 25, a. 1 [Leon. 22.3.729:131-44]: “Appetitus ergo naturalis tendit in ipsam rem appetibilem sine aliqua apprehensione rationis appetibilitatis: nihil enim est aliud appetitus naturalis quam quaedam inclinationi rei, et ordo ad aliquam rem sibi convenientem, sicut lapidem ferri ad locum deorsum. Sed haec apprehensio praexigitur in instituente naturam, qui unicumque naturae dedit inclinationem propriam sibi convenientem.”

\(^{33}\) In I Phys., lect. 15, n. 10 [Leon. 2.53]: “Nihil est . . . aliud appetitus naturalis quam ordinatio aliquorum secundum propriam naturam in suum finem.”

\(^{34}\) De ver., q. 22, a. 4 [Leon. 22/3.620:56-64]: The sensitive appetite is “closer to God” than the natural appetite, though it be inferior to the rational appetite. Ibid. [Leon. 22/3.620:65-82]. The cognitive appetites in general are “more perfect” because they involve a greater degree of self-direction on the part of the creature. Ibid. [Leon. 22/3.620:21:65-102]; ST I, q. 59, a. 1 [Leon. 6.592]. Cf. In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 3, a. 1, qc. 1 [Parma 7/2.1214]. On Divine cognition prior to natural inclination, see Chapter VII.

\(^{35}\) De ver., q. 22, a. 4 [Leon. 22/3.620:56-64]: The sensitive appetite is “closer to God” than the natural appetite, though it be inferior to the rational appetite. Ibid. [Leon. 22/3.620:65-82]. The cognitive appetites in general are “more perfect” because they involve a greater degree of self-direction on the part of the creature. Ibid. [Leon. 22/3.620:21:65-102]; ST I, q. 59, a. 1 [Leon. 6.592]. Cf. In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 3, a. 1, qc. 1 [Parma 7/2.1214]. On Divine cognition prior to natural inclination, see Chapter VII.
natural vital motion of desire, since also the good itself, toward which they tend by
natural inclination through the work of life, is some similitude of the highest good.”34 If
“appetite” is understood in a merely psychological sense, it is difficult to grasp what St.
Thomas means by “natural appetite,” either in the case or irrational creatures or of man. As
Jorge LaPorta warns,

L’expression ‘l’appétit’ est dangereuse. Le terme est employé communément pour désigne le
désir conscient du bien aperçu par un être animé. C’est à cette activité psychique que le
lecteur songe spontanément; il est difficile de s’en défaire.35

Applied to inanimates, it smacks of anthropomorphism. How can knowledge and “striving”
be attributed to non-living things? Applied to man, “natural appetite” is easily confused with
the psychological appetites of sense and will. And yet for St. Thomas, La Porta explains, “Or
pour St. Thomas le terme appetitus naturalis a une portée métaphysique. Il désigne une
réalité à la fois plus sobre et plus vaste: la finalité de chaque être, nettement distincte de
l’acte naturel qui suit: natura, forma naturalis—inclinatio, appetitus naturalis—motus, actio,
operatio naturalis.”36 In other words, the natural appetite does not constitute an activity; it is
nothing other than the pure finality inherent in each thing.”37

But, as Gustafson observes, appetitus must be understood in a metaphysical,
transcendental sense:

[W]e are able to prescind from activity itself and to reduce appentency to a proportionality
between the appetizing [i.e., “striving,” not “tasty”] subject and the appetible object . . . . The
idea of appetite thus stripped of its individuating notes applies to every inclination of a being

34 In De div. nom., cap. 4, lect. 3, n. 318 [Marietti 104]: “plantae quae sunt expertes sensus, desiderant
bonum divinum naturali motu vitalis desiderii, quia et ipsum bonum est ad quod naturali inclinatione tendunt
per opera vitae in similitudinem aliquam summi boni.”
35 Jorge LaPorta, “Pour trouver le sens exact des termes: ‘appetitus naturalis’, ‘desiderium naturale’,
‘amor naturalis’ etc. chez Thomas d’Aquin,” Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge 40
36 Ibid.
37 La Porta, Le sens exact, 78 “L’appétit naturel ne constitue aucune activité, il n’est que la pure finalité
incluse dans chaque être.”
to its proper object. It is thus that St. Thomas can speak of the appetite of the eye for the light or the appetite of prime matter for its form. And it is because appetency fundamentally implies a proportion rather than a desire in our modern sense of the word that the philosophy of St. Thomas ad rem can be cleared of the charge of naïve anthropomorphism . . . 38

The distinction between ontological-natural appetite and psychological-higher appetite can also be understood in terms of the type of form in each case, from which operation follows. In general, every inclination follows upon some form.” 39 The natural appetite follows on the natural form of the thing, whereas the sensitive and rational appetites follow upon a sensible or intelligible form, respectively. 40 More precisely, natural appetite follows upon form existing in nature and tends to the good in itself, whereas sensitive or rational appetite follows upon apprehended form and tends towards the good as apprehended. 41

St. Thomas distinguishes between natural appetite and the higher appetite on the basis of the difference between the kind of form upon which the respective appetite follows. He distinguishes the natural appetite from the animal appetite as follows:

The natural appetite is that inclination which each thing has, of its own nature, for something; wherefore by its natural appetite each power desires something suitable to itself. But the animal appetite results from the form apprehended; this sort of appetite requires a special power of the soul—mere apprehension does not suffice. For a thing is desired as it exists in its own nature, whereas in the apprehensive power it exists not according to its own nature, but according to its likeness. 42

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38 Gustafson, Natural Appetency, 78.
39 ST I-II, q. 8. a. 1: “omnis inclinatio consequatur aliquam formam.”
40 In II De anima, lect. 5, n. 8 [Leon. 45/1.88:104-117]: “Ex unaquaque autem forma sequitur aliqua inclinatio, et ex inclinatione operatio; sicut ex forma naturali ignis, sequitur inclinatio ad locum qui est sursum, secundum quam ignis dicitur levis; et ex hac inclinatione sequitur operatio, scilicet motus qui est sursum. Ad formam igitur tam sensibilem quam intelligibilem sequitur inclinatio quaedam quae dicitur appetitus sensibilis vel intellectualis; sicut inclinatio consequens formam naturalem, dicitur appetitus naturalis.”
41 ST I-II, q. 8 a. 1: “appetitus naturalis consequitur formam in natura existentem, appetitus autem sensitivus, vel etiam intellectivus seu rationalis, qui dicitur voluntas, sequitur formam apprehensam. Sicut igitur id in quod tendit appetitus naturalis, est bonum existens in re; ita id in quod tendit appetitus animalis vel voluntarius, est bonum apprehensum.”
42 ST I, q. 78, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.251]: “appetitus naturalis est inclinatio cuiuslibet rei in aliquid, ex natura sua, unde naturali appetitu quaelibet potentia desiderat sibi conveniens. Sed appetitus animalis consequitur formam apprehensam. Et ad huissmodi appetitum requiritur specialis animae potentia, et non sufficit sola apprehensio. Res enim appetitur prout est in sua natura, non est autem secundum suam naturam in
The natural appetite is determined to a single thing, whereas the animal appetite “extends to as many different things as animals have need of.” The sensitive appetite follows sense apprehension of a particular good, e.g., “sweet, white, etc.” The natural appetite is prior to animal appetite, but each level of appetite can have the same object. A lion may have a natural inclination to food, or perhaps to eat antelopes, but the lion must also have a sensitive appetite which enables it to desire this or that antelope. This distinction is important because, as is discussed below, although it is in one sense natural for an animal to seek particular goods on the basis of apprehended form, animals (man included) nevertheless have a distinct natural (ontological) appetite prior to any cognition of sensible form.

Beyond the sensitive appetite, there is higher appetite, one which follows freely from an apprehension in the subject of the appetite. This is the rational or intellectual appetite, that is, will. To understand natural inclination, it is especially important to distinguish between natural appetite and rational appetite, or, in other words, between natural inclination and the inclination of the will that follows upon apprehension. Whereas the natural appetite is to one

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43 De ver., q. 22, a. 3, ad 2 [Leon. 22/3.619:114-20]: “Et ideo, cum appetitus naturalis sit determinatus ad unum, nec possit esse multiformis, ut in tot diversa se extendat quot animalia indigent.” See also De ver., q. 25, a. 1 [Leon. 22.3.729:136-41] (“Quia vero res naturalis in suo esse naturali determinata est; et una est eius inclinatio ad aliquam rem determinatam: unde non exigitur aliqua apprehensio, per quam secundum rationem appetibilitatis distinguatur res appetibilis a non appetibili”); De ver., q. 25, a. 1 [Leon. 22.3.729:173-81] (“appetitus naturalis habet necessitatem respectu ipsius rei in quam tendit, sicut grave necessario appetit locum deorsum. Appetitus autem sensitivus non habet necessitatem in rem aliquam, antequam apprehendatur sub ratione delectabilis vel utilis; sed apprehenso quod est delectabile, de necessitate fertur in illud: non enim potest brutum animal inspiciens delectabile, non appetere illud”).

44 ST I, q. 59, a. 1 [Leon. 5.92].

45 ST I-II, q. 30, a. 3, ad 1: “illud idem quod appetitur appetitu naturali, potest appeti appetitu animali cum fuerit apprehensum. Et secundum hoc cibi et potus et huiusmodi, quae appetuntur naturaliter, potest esse concupiscencia naturalis.”

46 ST I-II, q. 26, a. 1 [Leon. 6.188]: “Alius . . . est appetitus consequens apprehensionem appetentis secundum liberum iudicium. Et talis est appetitus rationalis sive intellectivus, qui dicitur voluntas.”
thing, the rational appetite is to the good in general, which is found in many particular things.\textsuperscript{47} Further, the will is “under necessity in regard to goodness and utility itself (for man of necessity wills good), but is not under any necessity in regard to this or that particular thing, however much it may be apprehended as good or useful.”\textsuperscript{48}

The inclination of the will to a particular good is caused by the will itself, whereas natural appetite comes from an extrinsic principle:

\[\text{[N]atural appetite, which is nothing other than the inclination of a thing towards its natural end which is from the direction of the one who establishes nature, and also the voluntary appetite, which is the inclination of the one knowing the end . . . Thus therefore it is clear that in this the natural appetite differs from the voluntary appetite: that the inclination of the natural appetite is from an extrinsic principle, and therefore does not have liberty, since the free is what is its own cause.}\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{47} De ver., q. 25, a. 1 [Leon. 22.3.729:144-58]; “Appetitus autem superior, qui est voluntas, tendit directe in rationem appetibilitatis absolute; sicut voluntas ipsam bonitatem appetit primo et principaliter, vel utilitatem, aut aliquid huiusmodi; hanc vero rem vel illam appetit secundario, in quantum est praedictae rationes particeps; et hoc ideo quia natura rationalis est tantae capacitatis quod non sufficeret ei inclinatio ad unam rem determinatam, sed indiget rebus pluribus et diversis: et ideo inclinatio eius est in aliquid commune, quod in pluribus invenitur, et sic per apprehensionem illius communis tendit in rem appetibilem, in qua huiusmodi rationem appetendam esse cognoscit.”

\textsuperscript{48} De ver., q. 25, a. 1 [Leon. 22.3.729:181-88]; “Sed voluntas habet necessitatem respectu ipsius bonitatis et utilitatis: de necessitate enim vult homo bonum, sed non habet necessitatem respectu huius vel illius rei quantumcumque apprehendatur ut bona vel utilis quod ideo est, quia unaquaque potentia habet quamdam necessariam habitudinem ad suum proprium obiectum.”

\textsuperscript{49} In III Sent., d. 27, q. 1, a. 2 [Moos 3.861]: “appetitum naturalem, qui nihil aliud est quam inclinatio rei in finem suum naturalem qui est ex directione instituentis naturam . . . inclinatio naturalis appetitus est ex principio extrinseco.” Sic ergo patet quod in hoc differt appetitus naturalis et voluntarius, quod inclinatio naturalis appetitus est ex principio extrinseco; et ideo non habet libertatem, quia liberum est quod est sui causa: inclinatio autem voluntarii appetitus est in ipso volente; et ideo habet voluntatem libertatem.” There is, however, a sense in which God moves the will both at the level of natural appetite and in the case of each particular volition. A text which shows this twofold causality also perfectly illustrates the intrinsic and extrinsic sense of the terms \textit{inclinatio} and \textit{inclinare}. The will itself is an inclination to the universal good, and God is the only mover that can incline the will to the universal good. See \textit{ST} I, q. 105, a. 4 [Leon. 5.474]: “voluntas movetur ab obiecto, et ab eo qui creat virtutem volendi. Potest autem voluntas moveri sicut ab obiecto, a quocumque bono; non tamen sufficienter et efficaciter nisi a Deo. Non enim sufficienter aliquid potest movere aliquod mobile, nisi virtus activa moventis excedat, vel saltem aadequat virtutem passivam mobilis. Virtus autem passiva voluntatis se extendit ad bonum in universali, est enim eius obiectum bonum universale, sicut et intellectus obiectum est ens universale. Quodlibet autem bonum creatum est quoddam particulae bonum, solus autem Deus est bonum universale. Unde ipse solus implet voluntatem, et sufficienter eam movet ut obiectum. Similiter autem et virtus volendi a solo Deo causatur. Velle enim nihil aliud est quam inclinatio quaedam in obiectum voluntatis, quod est bonum universale. Inclinare autem in bonum universale est primi moventis cui proportionatur ultimus finis, sicut in rebus humanis dirigere ad bonum commune est eius qui praeest multitudini. Unde utroque modo proprium est Dei movere voluntatem, sed maxime secundo modo, interius eam inclinando.”
The inclination of the rational appetite is closer to God than that of either the sensitive or natural appetites in the sense that the rational creature determines its own inclination.\(^{50}\) Nevertheless, the rational being also has a natural appetite distinct from, and prior to, rational appetite.

St. Thomas further specifies the thing apprehended upon which rational appetite follows. The natural appetite is “nothing but an inclination and ordination of the thing to something else which is in keeping with it, like the ordination of a stone to a place below.”\(^{51}\) Natural appetite tends to the appetible thing “without any apprehension of the reason for its appetibility.”\(^{52}\) By contrast, rational appetite—i.e., the will—tends directly to the ratio of the appetibility of the thing towards which it tends. It does so in two ways:

Thus the will tends primarily and principally to goodness itself, or utility, or something like that. It tends to this or that appetible thing, however, secondarily, inasmuch as it shares in the above-mentioned reason. This is because a rational nature has a capacity so great that an inclination to one determinate thing would not be sufficient for it, but it has need of a number of different things. For that reason its inclination is to something common found in many things; and so by the apprehension of that common aspect it tends to the appetible thing in which it knows that this aspect is to be sought.\(^{53}\)

It is important to understand that the inclination of the will (rational appetite)—which follows upon apprehension—is not the same as the natural inclination of the will considered

\(^{50}\) *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 4 [Leon. 22/3.620:82-91]: “Sed natura rationalis, quae est Deo vicinissima, non solum habet inclinationem in aliquid sicut habent inanimata, nec solum movens hanc inclinationem quasi aliunde eis determinatam, sicut natura sensibilis; sed ultra hoc habet in potestate ipsam inclinationem, ut non sit ei necessarium inclinari ad appetibile apprehensum, sed possit inclinari vel non inclinari. Et sic ipsa inclinatio non determinatur ei ab alio, sed a se ipsa.”

\(^{51}\) *De ver.*, q. 25, a. 1 [Leon. 22.3.729:133-36]: “nihil enim est aliud appetitus naturalis quam quaedam inclinatio rei, et ordo ad aliquam rem sibi conveniencem, sicut lapidem ferri ad locum deorsum.”

\(^{52}\) Ibid. “non exigitur aliqua apprehensio, per quam secundum rationem appetibilitatis distinguatur res appetibilis a non appetibili.”

\(^{53}\) *De ver.*, q. 25, a. 1 [Leon. 22.3.729:144-158]: “Appetitus autem superior, qui est voluntas, tendit directe in rationem appetibilitatis absolute; sicut voluntas ipsam bonitatem appetit primo et principaliter, vel utilitatem, aut aliquid huiusmodi; hanc vero rem vel illam appetit secundario, in quantum est praedictae rationis particeps; et hoc ideo quia natura rationalis est tantae capacitatis quod non sufficeret ei inclinatio ad unam rem determinatam, sed indiget rebus pluribus et diversis: et ideo inclinatio eius est in aliquid commune, quod in pluribus invenitur, et sic per apprehensionem illius communis tendit in rem appetibilem, in qua huiusmodi rationem appetendam esse cognoscit.”
as a power (natural appetite of the will). The will’s natural inclination is a natural ordination of the will as a power and, as such, does not itself require apprehension on the part of human intellect. Whereas the will is “determined by nature” to have a natural inclination to the good and happiness in general, the will as rational appetite is “inclined toward anything whatever that is presented to it under the aspect of good.”

St. Thomas makes clear that all three levels of appetite are present in man and that natural appetite is distinct from the higher appetites. Although man naturally operates through apprehension and will, his natural appetite itself is not psychological, which is to say, it does not follow from the act of a cognitive power. Most clearly, the natural appetite that operates through his vegetative functions does not result from imagination. But man’s natural appetite, as noted, is not limited to vegetative functions. As further discussed below, man’s sensitive and rational appetites presuppose the natural appetite of his sensitive and rational powers.

B. Natural Appetite in Man: Sensitive and Rational Appetites Rooted in Natural Appetite

Because St. Thomas frequently refers to natural appetite with reference to irrational creatures as opposed to sensitive or rational creatures, it is easy to get the impression that the notion of natural appetite in man either does not apply at all, or that, in man, natural appetite

54 SCG II, cap. 48, n. 6 [Leon. 13.381]: “cum intellectus per formam apprehensam moveat voluntatem; in omnibus autem movens et motum oporteat esse proportionata; voluntas substantiae intellectualis non erit determinata a natura nisi ad bonum commune. Quicquid igitur offeretur sibi sub ratione boni, poterit voluntas inclinari in illud, nulla determinatione naturali in contrarium prohibente.”

55 In II Sent., d. 24, q. 3, a. 1: “Naturalis quidem appetitus, puta cibi, est quem non imaginatio gignit, sed ipsa qualitatum naturalium dispositio, quibus naturales vires suas actiones exercent. Hic autem motus in nullo rationi subjacet nec obedit . . . .” See also ST I-II, q. 17, a. 8: “actuum quidam procedunt ex appetitu naturali, quidam autem ex appetitu animali vel intellectuali, omne enim agens aliquo modo appetit finem. Appetitus autem naturalis non consequitur aliquam apprehensionem, sicut sequitur appetitus animalis et intellectualis.”
means rational appetite. Thomas sometimes gives the impression that natural appetite is present only in inanimate or irrational creatures, because in the texts in which he distinguishes natural from other appetites, his examples of natural appetite often involve stones or other naturalia. But as Gustafson warns, “it would be a grave mistake to dismiss appetitus naturalis once we come upon creatures endowed with knowledge.”

For natural appetite, St. Thomas writes, “is the inclination of anything whatsoever, of its nature, towards something; hence by natural appetite any power whatsoever desires what is suitable to it.” As St. Thomas says, “any power is a nature and is naturally inclined to something.”

It belongs to “each power of the soul to seek its proper good by the natural appetite, which does not arise from apprehension.” In terms of inclination, St. Thomas writes, “Each power of the soul is a certain form or nature, and has a natural inclination to something. Wherefore each power desires by the natural appetite that object which is suitable to itself.” Above this natural appetite is animal or rational appetite, which is consequent upon apprehension.

Natural appetite exists at all levels within man’s nature. As a heavy body, man is naturally inclined to the center of the earth “by default” as it were, that is, he tends downward when the inclinations of his animal and rational appetites do not override gravity. Under normal conditions, for example, the sleeping man does not float upwards or move across the

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56 Gustafson, Natural Appetency, 74.
57 ST I, q. 78, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.251]: “appetitus naturalis est inclinatio ciuslibet rei in aliquid, ex natura sua, unde naturali appetitu quaelibet potentia desiderat sibi conveniens.” Natural appetite “underlies those very faculties which, as natures, have their own natural appetites for their proper objects.” Gustafson, Natural Appetency, 74.
58 De ver., q. 25, a. 2, ad 8 [Leon. 22/3.734:240-44]: “Quaelibet potentia natura quaedam est, et naturaliter in aliquid inclinatur.” See also ST I, q. 80, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.282]; De ver., q. 22, a. 3, ad 5 [Leon. 22/3.619:139-49].
59 ST I-II, q. 30, a. 1, ad 3: “Unicuique potentiae appetere competit proprium bonum appetitu naturali qui non sequitur apprehensionem.”
60 ST I, q. 80, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.282]: “unquaquaeque potestia animae est quaedam forma seu natura, et habet naturali inclinationem in aliquid. Unde unquaquaeque appetit obiectum sibi conveniens naturali appetitu. Supra quem est appetitus animalis consequens apprehensionem.”
room. His vegetative and generative powers also have their respective natural appetites.  

The powers of sense perception have a natural appetite for apprehending their respective objects, which natural appetite is the basis for all subsequent inclinations of the sensitive appetite. The intellect is inclined to its act, knowledge, by a natural appetite. The will, in its turn, has its own natural appetite, which is a certain “necessary relation” to its proper object, the good in general.  

It remains, then, to show how man’s higher appetites are related to his natural appetite. In general, “since nature is first in everything, what belongs to nature must be a principle in everything.” Accordingly, “natural inclinations are the principles of all supervenient inclinations.” The inclinations and movements of the cognitive and appetitive faculties therefore presuppose the natural inclinations. For St. Thomas, each thing is “determined to its own natural being by its natural form.” This is true of sensitive and intellectual natures as well as inanimate natures:

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61 ST I-II, q. 17, a. 8.
62 See De ver., q. 22, a. 12, ad 2 [Leon. 22/3.642:127-30] (intellect inclined to its act by natural appetite). In terms of NI, see De ver., q. 22, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 22/3.624:234-48] (NI of intellect to understand); ST I, q. 83, a. 2 [Leon. 5.309] (NI to assent to first principles, for which have a natural habit); ST I-II, q. 41 a. 3 (NI to acts accomplished by the apprehensive faculties). ST I-II, q. 62, a. 3 (by NI man is ordered to his connatural end according to reason insofar as it contains first principles naturally known from which reason proceeds in both speculative and practical matters).
63 Gustafson, Natural Appetency, 75.
64 ST I, q. 60, a. 2 [Leon. 5.99] (“cum natura sit primum quod est in unoquoque, oportet quod id quod ad naturam pertinet, sit principium in quolibet”). Cf. ST I-II, q. 49, a. 2 (“semper . . . quod naturalius est, prius est”).
65 ST II-II, q. 155, a. 2 [Leon. 10.254]: “Est autem considerandum quod naturales inclinationes principia sunt omnium supervenientium . . . .” St. Thomas also distinguishes between adventitious qualities and natural qualities. The natural is prior to the adventitious. See ST I, q. 83, a. 1, ad 5 [Leon. 5.308] (“qualitas hominis est duplex, una naturalis, et alia superveniens. Naturalis autem qualitas accipi potest vel circa partem intellectivam; vel circa corpus et virtutes corpori annexas. Ex eo igitur quod homo est aliqualis qualitate naturali quae attenditur secundum intellectivam partem, naturaliter homo appetit ultimum finem, scilicet beatitudinem. Qui quidem appetitus naturalis est, et non subiacet libero arbitrio, ut ex supradictis patet. . . . Qualitates autem supervenientes sunt sicut habitus et passiones, secundum quae aliquis magis inclinatur in unum quam in alterum”); ST I-II, q. 49, a. 2 (“qualitatum quaedam sunt naturales, quae secundum naturam insunt, et semper, quaedam autem sunt adventitiae, quae ab extrinseco efficiuntur . . . semper enim quod naturalius est, prius est”).
Form is found to have a more perfect existence in those things which participate knowledge than in those which lack knowledge. For in those which lack knowledge, the form is found to determine each thing only to its own being—that is, to its nature. . . . But in those things which have knowledge, each one is determined to its own natural being by its natural form, in such a manner that it is nevertheless receptive of the species of other things: for example, sense receives the species of all things sensible, and the intellect, of all things intelligible, so that the soul of man is, in a way, all things by sense and intellect . . .

1. Sensitive Appetite Rooted in Natural Appetite

In the animal appetite, there is a natural inclination “by which it is in a way naturally forced to tend toward that which is desirable.” The animal appetite is natural in the sense that it acts or moves according to its pre-existing natural inclination. The animal appetite follows upon apprehension of objects to which the animal is already naturally inclined:

An irrational animal takes one thing in preference to another, because its appetite is naturally determinate to that thing. Wherefore as soon as an animal, whether by its sense or by its imagination, is offered something to which its appetite is naturally inclined, it is moved to that alone, without making any choice.

Prior to its being presented something by sense or imagination, that is, prior to any opportunity for apprehension, the animal does not yet act upon its natural inclination or move toward the good towards which it is naturally inclined. But at the level of nature, it is inclined nevertheless.

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66 ST I, q. 80, a. 1 [Leon. 5.282]: “quamlibet formam sequitur aliqua inclinatio, sicut ignis ex sua forma inclinatur in superiorem locum, et ad hoc quod generet sibi simile. Forma autem in his quae cognitionem participant, altiori modo inventur quam in his quae cognitione carent. In his enim quae cognitione carent, inventur tantummodo forma ad unum esse proprium determinans unumquodque, quod etiam naturale uniucusiusque est. . . . In habentibus autem cognitionem, sic determinatur unumquodque ad proprium esse naturale per formam naturalem, quod tamen est receptivum specierum aliarum rerum, sicut sensus recipit species omnium sensibilium, et intellectus omnium intelligibilium, ut sic anima hominis sit omnia quodammodo secundum sensum et intellectum.”

67 De ver., q. 15, a. 3 [Leon. 22/2.491:87-90]: “in appetitu inferiori inest quaedam naturalis inclinatio, qua quodammodo naturaliter cogitur appetitus ut in appetibile tendat.” Thomas’s use of cogere (to force) to describe natural inclination is unusual. He more typically distinguishes the necessitas of natural inclination from the (violent) necessity of force.

68 ST I-II, q. 13, a. 2, ad 2: “brutum animal accipit unum prae alio, quia appetitus eius est naturaliter determinatus ad ipsum. Unde statim quando per sensum vel per imaginacionem repraesentatur sibi aliquid ad quod naturaliter inclinatur eius appetitus, absque electione in illud solum movetur. Sicut etiam absque electione ignis movetur sursum, et non deorsum.”
The spider always spins a particular web because its animal appetite is determined by its natural inclination to spin webs. The sheep always flees from this wolf or that wolf precisely because its animal appetite is completely determined by its natural aversion to wolves. St. Thomas explains such “sheepishness” as follows:

In all things of the same species there is the same unchanging good. Hence they have a natural inclination to it and a natural judgment in the cognitive power with respect to that uniform good. From this natural judgment and desire it comes about that all swallows build their nests in the same way and all spiders spin a web in the same way, and so it is with all beasts.69

2. Rational Appetite is Based on the Natural Inclination of the Will

Like the sensitive appetite, the rational appetite, i.e., the inclination of the will, is rooted in natural inclination. The will, considered as a power within man’s nature, is not “absolutely” distinct from natural appetite, but rather includes it, “as man includes animal.”70 That is, the will itself, as St. Thomas repeatedly affirms, has its own natural inclination—or, equivalently, natural appetite.71 In ST I-II, q. 91 a. 2, St. Thomas considers the question of whether there is in us a natural law. It is objected that there is no natural law for man because

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69 De virt. comm., a. 6 [Marietti 722]: “est in omnibus unius speciei bonum uniformiter se habens. Unde per appetitum naturalem inclinationem habent in id, et per vim cognitivam naturalem iudicium habent de illo proprio sono uniformiter se habente. Et ex hoc naturali iudicio et naturali appetitu provenit quod omnis hirundo uniformiter facit nidum, et quod omnis aranea uniformiter facit telam; et sic est in omnibus albis brutis considerare.”

70 De ver., q. 22, a. 5, ad s.c. 6 [Leon. 22/3.626:363-69]: “voluntas dividitur contra appetitum naturalem cum praecisione sumptum, id est qui est naturalis tantum, sicut homo contra id quod est animal tantum; non autem dividitur contra appetitum naturalem absolute, sed includit ipsum, sicut homo includit animal.”

71 See, e.g., ST I, q. 60 a. 1 [Leon. 5.98] (natural inclination of will as natural appetite according to its mode); ST I, q. 87, a. 4 (natural inclination of will according to its mode); In III Sent., d. 27, q. 1, a. 2 [Moos 3.861] (will has a prior natural inclination from another who is the cause of the willing); ST I, q. 106, a. 2 [Leon. 5.483-84] (natural inclination of will follows upon power); De ver., q. 22, a. 9 [Leon. 22/3.633:101-02] (NI given to will by creator); In II Sent., d. 39, q. 3, a. 1, ad 5 [Mand. 2.995] (natural inclination by which man naturally wills the good is the order of nature to act); De ver., q. 24, a. 10, ad 2 [Leon. 22/3.708:375-76] (inclination of the will is naturally to one thing); ST I, q. 59, a. 2 [Leon. 5.93] (natural inclination of will to good); ST I, q. 62 a. 2 [Leon. 5.111] (natural inclination of will to what is fitting according to nature); ST I-II, q. 78, a. 3 [Leon. 6.73-74] (Will inclined to good from the nature of its power). See Appendix (“Index of Natural Inclinations”) for citations to many additional examples.
the ordering of human acts is not through nature, as is the case with irrational creatures, but rather through reason and will. St. Thomas’s reply shows that will is grounded in nature:

Every act of reason and will in us is based on that which is according to nature . . . for every act of reasoning is based on principles that are known naturally, and every act of appetite in respect of the means is derived from the natural appetite in respect of the last end.

Voluntary action is possible, then, only because man has a natural capacity for, and inclination towards, such action: “Nature, though it be prior to the voluntary, nevertheless has a certain inclination to voluntary action.

Although the will is not determined with respect to the means towards its end, it is determined by its principle, which is the last end:

Something is said to be necessary from the fact that it is unchangeably determined to one thing. Since, therefore, the will stands undetermined in regard to many things, it is not under necessity in regard to everything but only in regard to those things to which it is determined by a natural inclination . . . .

There is a two-fold object of the will. On one hand, the natural inclination of the will is “implanted [inditum] in the will and proposed to it by the Creator;” on the other hand, “there

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72 ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2, arg. 2 [Leon. 7.154]: “per legem ordinatur homo in suis actibus ad finem, ut supra habitum est. Sed ordinatio humanorum actuum ad finem non est per naturam, sicut accidit in creaturis irrationabilibus, quae solo appetitu naturali agunt propter finem, sed agit homo propter finem per rationem et voluntatem. Ergo non est aliqua lex homini naturalis.”

73 ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.154]: “omnis operatio, rationis et voluntatis derivatur in nobis ab eo quod est secundum naturam, ut supra habitum est [I-II, q. 10, a. 1], nam omnis ratiocinatio derivatur a principiis naturaliter notis, et omnis appetitus eorum quae sunt ad finem, derivatur a naturali appetitu ultimi finis. Et sic etiam oportet quod prima directio actuum nostrorum ad finem, fiat per legem naturalem.” The will is “founded” on nature. ST I-II, q. 10, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 6.83]: “voluntas dividitur contra naturam, sicut una causa contra aliam, quaedam enim fiunt naturaliter, et quaedam fiunt voluntarie. Est autem alius modus causandi proprius voluntati, quae est domina sui actus, praeter modum qui convenit naturae, quae est determinata ad unum. Sed quia voluntas in aliqua natura fundatur, necesse est quod motus proprius naturae, quantum ad aliquid, participetur in voluntate, sicut quod est prioris cause, participatur a posteriori. Est enim prius in unaquaque re ipsum esse, quod est per naturam, quam velle, quod est per voluntatem. Et inde est quod voluntas naturaliter aliquid vult.”

74 ST I-II, q. 85, a. 1, ad 2: “natura, etsi sit prior quam voluntaria actio, tamen habet inclinationem ad quandam voluntariam actionem.”

75 De ver., q. 22, a. 6 [Leon. 22/3.627:68-101]: “aliquid dicitur esse necessarium, quod est immutabiliter determinatum ad unum. Unde, cum voluntas indeterminate se habeat respectu multorum, non habet respectu omnium necessitatem, sed respectu eorum tantum ad quae naturali inclinatione determinatur . . . .”
is another object of the will capable of inclining the will inasmuch as there is in it some likeness or ordination with regard to the last end which is naturally desired."

Although the will is free in its operations, it is necessitated at the level of nature. St. Thomas distinguishes between two kinds of necessity: the necessity of force and the necessity of natural inclination. The will cannot ever be forced, but is at the same time subject to the necessity of natural inclination. The one thing to which the will is naturally inclined by necessity is its ultimate end. The will cannot not will its ultimate end—i.e., man “cannot will unhappiness.”

This natural necessity is prior to any apprehension on the part of man:

[N]atural appetite is under necessity in regard to the thing to which it tends, as a heavy body necessarily tends to a place downward . . . the will is under necessity in regard to goodness and utility itself (for man of necessity wills good), but is not under any necessity in regard to this or that particular thing, however much it may be apprehended as good or useful. This is so because each power has some kind of necessary relationship to its proper object.

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76 De ver., q. 22, a. 9 [Leon. 22/3.633:97-112]: “Sed si consideretur actus voluntatis ex parte obiecti, sic voluntatis inventur duplex obiectum. Unum, ad quod de necessitate naturalis inclinacione determinatur. Et hoc quidem obiectum est voluntati inditum et propositum a creatore, qui ei naturalem inclinationem dedit in illud. Unde nullus potest necessario per tale obiectum immutare voluntatem nisi solus Deus. Aliud vero est obiectum voluntatis, quod quidem natum est inclinare voluntatem, in quantum est in eo aliqua similitudo vel ordo respectu ultimi finis naturaliter desiderati; non tamen ex hoc obiecto voluntas de necessitate immutatur, ut prius dictum est, quia non in eo singulariter inventur ordo ad ultimum finem naturaliter desideratum.”

77 De ver., q. 24, a. 1, ad 20 [Leon. 22/3.684:557-73] (necessity of natural inclination is not repugnant to free will); De ver., q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.623-24:147-222] (natural inclination of will is not forced); ST 1, q. 62, a. 3, ad 2 [Leon. 5.113] (mode of intellectual nature is to be freely inclined towards its desired object); De ver., q. 22, a. 6 [Leon. 22/3.627-28:68-164] (will is necessitated with respect to end, but not means); De ver., q. 22, a. 9 [Leon. 22/3.633:97-119] (natural inclination of will to its object is determined by necessity); De ver., q. 22, a. 5, ad s.c. 2 [Leon. 22/3.626:343-49] (will’s being directed to something of necessity by natural inclination is a strength, not a weakness).

78 De pot., q. 2, a. 3, ad 6 [Marietti 31]: “Quamvis enim ad inclinationem naturae voluntas ad aliquid unum determinetur, quod est ultimus finis a natura intentus . . . [Homo] naturaliter vult beatitudinem et de necessitate.”

79 De pot., q. 2, a. 3 [Marietti 31]: “voluntas humana non potest non velle beatitudinem.”

80 De ver., 25, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.729:173-88]: “appetitus naturalis habet necessitatatem respectu ipsius rei in quam tendit, sicut grave necessario appetit locum deorsum. . . . [V]oluntas habet necessitatem respectu ipsius bonitatis et utilitatis: de necessitate enim vult homo bonum, sed non habet necessitatem respectu huius vel illius rei quantumcumque apprehendatur ut bona vel utilis quod ideo est, quia unaquaque potestia habet quamdam necessarium habitudinem ad suum proprium obiectum.”
Because the will itself is a nature, there is “found in the will not only what is proper to the will but also what is proper to nature.” That which is proper to the nature of the will is “to be ordained by God for good, naturally tending to it. Hence even in the will there is a certain natural appetite for the good corresponding to it.”

By natural inclination of his will, man is generally inclined to the good. St. Thomas says, for example, that the will is naturally inclined “to the good,” “to the good of virtue,” “to that which is fitting to it according to nature,” and “to avoid misery.” But natural inclination alone does not achieve man’s accomplishment of his good. By natural inclination the will is such that it is “brought to happiness according to a common ratio, but nevertheless, the fact that it is brought to such or such happiness is not by the inclination of nature but through the discrimination of reason, which finds the highest good of man to consist in this or that thing.”

How then is the will’s natural, ontological, prior-to-apprehension inclination related to its inclination to the many particular goods it wills consequent upon apprehension? Each inclination of the rational appetite is, in a sense, “reducible to,” that is, founded upon, the will’s natural inclination for the ultimate end:

81 De ver., q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.624:174-201]: “Natura autem et voluntas hoc modo ordinata sunt, ut etiam ipsa voluntas quaedam natura sit; quia omne quod in rebus invenitur, natura quaedam dicitur. Et ideo in voluntate oportet invenire non solum id quod voluntatis est, sed etiam quod naturae est. Hoc autem est cuiuslibet naturae creatae, ut a Deo sit ordinata in bonum, naturaliter appetens illud. . . . Unde et voluntati ipsi inest naturalis quidam appetitus boni sibi convenientis.” Cf. In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2 [Mand. 2.992]: “inclinatio voluntatis ad bonum, quae est in natura humana.”

82 See, e.g., ST I, q. 59, a. 2 [Leon. 5.93] (“Voluntas autem habet inclinationem in bonum naturaliter.”); De malo, q. 1, a. 4 (“naturalis inclinatio voluntatis est ad bonum virtutis.”); ST I, q. 62, a. 2 [Leon. 5.111] (“Naturalis autem inclinationi voluntatis est ad id quod est conveniens secundum naturam.”); De ver., q. 24, a. 12, ad s.c. 10 [Leon. 22/3.720:660-64] (“Necessario enim voluntas miseriam abhorret; et hoc propter naturalem inclinationem”).

83 In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 3 [Parma 7/2.1193]: “Quamvis autem ex naturali inclinatione voluntas habeat ut in beatitudinem feratur secundum communem rationem, tamen quod feratur in beatitudinem tales vel tales, hoc non est ex inclinatione naturae, sed per discretionem rationis, quae adinventi in hoc vel in illo sumnum bonum hominis constare.”
Because everything mobile is reduced to what is immobile as its principle, and everything undetermined, to what is determined, that to which the will is determined must be the principle of tending to the things to which it is not determined; and this is the last end, as has been said. . . . [T]he will of necessity seeks the ultimate end, such that it cannot not seek that same [end]; but it is not of necessity that it seeks something of those things which pertain to the end. Whence with respect to things of this kind it is in its power to seek this or that [thing].

The object of natural appetite is the principle and foundation of the other objects of appetite. In this way, the will not only has a natural inclination to happiness in general but also to whatever is included in happiness: to be, knowledge of truth, etc.

As explained in Chapter IV (“Naturalis”), “natural” can refer to either (1) things that result entirely and necessarily from natural principles, or (2) in the case of human things, things towards which “nature inclines . . . though it be accomplished by the apprehensive faculty alone: since . . . the movements of the cognitive and appetitive faculties are reducible to nature as to their first principle.” In both cases, nature is at the root of the natural operation. Although St. Thomas does not describe the acts of the higher appetites as “natural appetites” or “natural inclinations,” they are rooted in, and perfective of, natural inclination.  

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84 *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 6 [Leon. 22/3.627:74-101]: “quia omne mobile reductur ad immobile, et indeterminatum ad determinatum, sicut ad principium; ideo oportet quod id ad quod voluntas est determinata, sit principium appetendi ea ad quae non est determinata; et hoc est finis ultimus . . . . [V]oluntas de necessitate appetit finem ultimum, ut non possit ipsum non appetere; sed non de necessitate appetit aliquid eorum quae sunt ad finem. Unde respectu huius modi est in eius postestate appetere hoc vel illud.” Cf. *De ver.*, q. 24, a. 10, ad 1 [Leon. 22/3.707:333-58] (by natural inclination free choice tends to the good but does not have sufficient principle from within to complete it).

85 Ibid.

86 *ST* I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273-74]: “ad quem natura inclinat, licet non perficiatur nisi per apprehensionem, quia . . . motus cognitivae et appetitivae virtutis reductur in naturam, sicut in principium primum.”

87 Robert Sullivan claims that *ST* I-II, q. 41, a. 3 shows that, for St. Thomas, the term natural appetite is used in two distinct senses: (1) the natural inclination preceding an act of a higher appetite; and (2) “the actual movement” perfected only through apprehension, inasmuch as it is rooted in natural inclination.” As explained below, Sullivan nevertheless rejects William O’Connor’s attempt to say that human natural appetite is only the actual movement upon apprehension. Robert P. Sullivan, “Natural Necessitation of the Human Will,” *The Thomist* 14 (1951), 518, n. 78. But Sullivan is misreading *ST* I-II, q. 41, a. 3. In this text, Thomas does not use the inclin-term to refer to the act of the cognitive or appetitive powers; instead he says that “nature inclines” to something which can only be perfected through acts of those powers. Nature inclines to the motion of the power; nature is not itself the motion. See *ST* I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273-74]: “ad quem natura inclinat, licet
Man’s natural appetite must work through the capabilities of man’s cognitive and appetitive faculties to reach its goal, but natural appetite nevertheless comes first:

Now in his nature man is proportioned to a certain end for which he has a natural appetite and for the obtaining of which he can work by his natural powers. That end is a contemplation of divine things such as is possible to man according to the capabilities of his nature; and in this contemplation philosophers have placed man’s ultimate happiness.\(^8\)

**D. Human Natural Inclination: Not Consequent on Apprehension**

To recapitulate, natural inclination is distinct from the higher appetites and requires no apprehension on the part of the inclining nature. Natural inclination is in the higher appetites considered as powers, but this natural inclination is “ontological,” that is, present prior to any “psychological” act of the sense appetite or will. The only apprehension required prior to natural inclination is that of the Creator. The same distinctions apply to human natural inclination. Man’s natural inclinations are prior to his apprehension of any particular non perficiatur nisi per apprehensionem, quia, sicut supra dictum est, motus cognitivae et appetitivae virtutis reducuntur in naturam, sicut in principium primum.” Compare to Lawrence Feingold’s distinction between an “innate appetite” and an “elicited act” of appetite:

[A] faculty of the soul can ‘desire’ its object in two fundamentally different ways: (1) as the object of the innate natural appetite, or (2) insofar as it is known to be a good for the creature as a whole (elicited and conscious desire). [citing Cajetan’s Commentary on *ST* I, q. 80, a. 1, ad 3, n. 5 (Leon. 5.283); and on I, q. 19, a. 1, n. 6 (Leon. 4.232).] In the former case, the desire for the object is always present in the very nature of the potency itself, as the *unconscious* tendency of the potency for its proper and fitting or proportionate act. Thomas speaks of this as the natural inclination or natural appetite of the potency. Beginning at the time of Suárez, this natural appetite or inclination is referred to by the technical term ‘innate appetite’ in order to distinguish it more clearly from a natural elicited act of the will . . . .

Elicited desire, on the other hand, refers to a passage or movement from potency to act in the appetitive faculty itself. It is a *conscious act* of a man or animal. What previously was not desired, is now actually desired on account of the presence of knowledge of the goodness of that object which *draws out* (elicits) an act of desire from the sensitive or rational appetite.

Lawrence Feingold, *Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas and His Interpreters* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2010), 14-15. Feingold’s distinction has the merit of not using the term “natural appetite” in an equivocal way to refer to both innate and elicited appetites.

\(^8\) *De ver.* , q. 27, a. 2 [Leon. 22/3.794:121-29]: “Homo autem secundum naturam suam proportionatus est ad quemdam finem, cuius habet naturalem appetitum; et secundum naturales vires operari potest ad consecutionem illius finis: qui finis est aliqua contemplatio divinorum, qualis est homini possibilis secundum facultatem naturae, in qua philosophi ultimam hominis felicitatem posuerunt.”
things or goods. This account of natural inclination seems clear enough from the texts discussed above, but it is nevertheless hotly contested in the natural law literature.

1. Status quaestionis

As discussed above, if “appetite” is taken in a purely psychological sense, “natural appetite” is at best mere metaphor or at worst rank anthropomorphism when applied to inanimate natures. The alternative is to understand natural appetite as ontological and pre-cognitive. But this alternative poses a problem when applied to man. How can man’s properly rational nature be understood to have a pre-cognitive (pre-rational?) natural inclination? A review of the literature suggests two solutions to this problem—one specious, the other sound.

2. First solution: natural inclination follows actual cognition (Brock, Dewan, and O’Connor)

One solution is to say that, in man, “natural appetite,” if it be truly appetite, can only apply to actual acts or motions of rational appetite following upon particular apprehended goods. That is to say, human natural appetite is nothing but rational appetite. Three authors take this view: Stephen Brock, Lawrence Dewan, and William O’Connor. Each seems to take appetite and inclination in a univocally psychological sense. In this view, every appetite or inclination of man—including natural appetite or inclination—follows upon apprehension. While they acknowledge that certain natural appetites are prior to apprehension at the level of man’s vegetative life, they deny that there is a pre-cognitive natural appetite of the will.

89 If it is understood as applying to man’s nature on a pre-cognitive level, the problem (paradoxically) of anthropomorphism remains. Man’s natural appetite, like man-in-operation, is a “striving” even in the absence of knowledge.
In I-II, q. 94, a. 2, St. Thomas states that “all those things to which man has a natural inclination, reason naturally apprehends as good.” Stephen Brock surveys a number of interpretations of this text and divides them into two broad approaches. Under the first approach, which Brock rejects, he includes a broad range of thinkers who agree on one thing: that the human natural inclinations are “pre-rational.” That is, the natural inclinations “would exist independently of reason’s apprehension of their objects as good, and the apprehension would somehow follow on them.”

In contrast to the pre-rationalist account of the natural inclinations, Brock adopts a startling alternative: man’s natural inclinations do not precede reason’s grasp of the good, but rather follow from human cognition of goods. Brock’s “basic thesis . . . is that not only the apprehension that St. Thomas is talking about . . . but also the inclination, is rational. Reason’s natural understanding of human goods does not follow the natural inclinations to them. The inclinations follow the understanding.” Consequently, “all of the natural human inclinations cited in 94.2 are inclinations of the will.” In other words, man’s threefold inclination (including the inclinations he shares with all substances and all animals) “are inclinations of the rational appetite, the appetite whose objects are always things

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90 N.b., according to Stephen Brock, there has been an “astonishing” variety of interpretations of this text. Stephen L. Brock, “Natural Inclination and the Intelligibility of the Good in Thomistic Natural Law,” Vera Lex 6 (2005): 58.
91 Ibid., 58-60.
92 Ibid., 60.
93 Ibid.
apprehended and presented to it by reason."  The natural inclinations are, then, not something that man’s reason understands, but rather they are the result of man’s understanding. This alternative is startling because St. Thomas so clearly teaches the priority of nature in natural inclination and the distinction between rational appetite and natural appetite. Brock collapses this distinction: natural inclination becomes, for purposes of q. 94, a. 2 at least, rational appetite. In Brock’s view, it seems, man’s rational nature does not incline until his reason grasps a good towards which he ought to incline.

Brock expressly sets out to confirm and develop a position he attributes to Lawrence Dewan. Dewan indeed contends that the “inclinative dimension of the natural law follows causally from the cognitive dimension.” In answer to the question “Can we put inclination and cognition together in the formula ‘knowledge through inclination’?” Dewan states:

Thomas’s primary doctrine concerning inclination is that it presupposes cognition. The cognition need not be in the being that has the inclination, but in the case of what is proper to the human being, the inclination is preceded by cognition: natural inclination is based on natural cognition. One may well say that the inclination has a cognitive dimension, but that dimension has priority within the whole. Thus, I maintain that Thomas’s natural inclinations, as presented in [ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2], presuppose natural knowledge.

But what are “natural cognition” and “natural knowledge”? This question is addressed in more depth in Chapter VII. For now, however, if by “cognition” Dewan means cognition in the ordinary psychological sense, the reception of intelligible form through human

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95 It seems that Brock’s thesis, if extended to speculative reason, would mean that man’s nature does not exist until his reason understands—a contradiction which Brock surely does not intend.
97 Ibid.
apprehension, he indeed seems to equate the natural inclination with the inclination of rational appetite, as Brock does.  

b. O’Connor

In an series of earlier (1947-53), more detailed arguments, William O’Connor had taken a position very similar to that of Brock and Dewan, at least with respect to the rational character of human natural appetite. O’Connor, through a lengthy textual analysis, attempts to show that the “natural appetite” of the will only follows upon apprehension. O’Connor cites a number of texts in which St. Thomas says the inclination to the good in various grades of creature is found differently accordingly to the mode of the creature. While natural appetite in inanimate creatures is necessarily without apprehension in the creature, it is the natural mode of animals and rational creatures, O’Connor claims, to have a natural appetite.

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98 Dewan rejects the view that “we first have [natural] appetite, and then see ourselves having appetite. This is not what [Aquinas] means.” Instead, “The object, the good, the being towards which appetite is envisaged, must be given in cognition prior to our having actual appetition. Appetition is known prior to appetition occurring. Thus, the notion of good, as including that of appetite, follows from the notions of being and intellectual apprehension.” Lawrence Dewan, “St. Thomas, Our Natural Lights, and the Moral Order.” Angelicum 67 (1990): 295.


100 He argues that the distinction between a pre-cognitive and cognitive natural appetite to later commenters on St. Thomas who imposed upon his true doctrine a spurious distinction between “innate” and “elicited” appetites. O’Connor, “Natural Desire for Happiness,” 117.

101 O’Connor, “Natural Desire for Happiness,” 97, citing ST I, q. 60 a. 1 [Leon. 5.98] (inclination found differently in different things), SCG II, cap. 55, n. 13 [Leon. 13.395] (natural appetite in certain beings as a result of apprehension), De ver., q. 22, a. 5, ad s.c. 6 [Leon. 22/3.626:363-69] (will includes natural appetite); ST I, q. 87, a. 4 [Leon. 5.363] (inclination of each thing according to mode). A full rebuttal of O’Connor’s position would require a separate study. For such a study, see Robert Sullivan, “Natural Necessitation of the Human Will,” The Thomist 14 (1951), 351-99; 490-528.
that follows upon sense perception and intellection, respectively. The gist of his argument is this:

St. Thomas has not a univocal notion of natural appetite, but views it according to the analogy of being and of nature. Where cognition does not enter as a factor in a nature, natural appetite will be completely independent of cognition in the subject. Where, however, cognition is a factor in the nature of a power, as it is in the case of the sensitive appetite and the will, natural desire will not be independent of knowledge.102

He then bluntly dismisses the notion that natural appetite in man is prior to cognition: “St. Thomas is unacquainted with a natural appetite that is purely ontological and without cognition, when he is speaking of the sensitive appetite and of the will.”103 The entire issue, for O’Connor, turns on an analogical understanding of natural appetite:

The main issue is this:Are there any natural forms that depend upon cognition, so that the natural appetite flowing from such forms will be towards an apprehended good? When St. Thomas recognizes the analogy of natural appetite he answers this question in the affirmative. The will is by definition the rational appetite; even as a natural power of the soul it is inclined towards the apprehended good as its proper object or end. This means a priority of the apprehended good over the natural movements of the will, as the final cause maintains a priority over all the movements that lead to it as their end.104

3. Second solution: Natural appetite is always prior to human cognition (Bradley et al.)

Brock, Dewan, and O’Connor psychologize human natural inclination. Although their chief concern may be with the important question of how we know our natural inclinations, they carry their argument a step too far by equating nature with our knowledge of nature. They neglect the natural, pre-cognitive “core” of human natural appetite, which is the ontological ordination of the will to the good. Natural inclination in this sense is a relation or

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102 William O’Connor, “Natural Desire for Happiness,” 97. “St. Thomas more or less habitually confines natural appetite to natures or powers in which cognition is not a factor (for example, the vegetative powers), and in this sense he contrasts it with the sensitive appetite and the will.” Ibid., 101. See ibid. 117.
103 Ibid.
104 William O’Connor, “Natural Desire for Happiness,” 118. By “natural movements” of the will, O’Connor apparently means movements that result from apprehension.
order, not a particular act or motion. Brock, as noted, identifies a diverse group of interpreters who hold that the natural inclinations “would exist independently of reason’s apprehension of their objects as good, and the apprehension would somehow follow on them.” My concern is not to address all of these interpreters, but instead to focus on what I take to be the traditional Thomistic approach to natural inclination, which is currently best represented by Denis J. M. Bradley.

Bradley clearly sets forth an ontological understanding of natural appetite. The will’s natural appetite is its “inherent finality”:

Aquinas attributes the necessity of apprehending things as good (and thus necessarily desiring them) to the natural appetite of the will. Indeed, the natural teleology of the will may be called a ‘directive’ or teleological principle of the intellectual acts that generate Natural Law prescriptions. The natural inclination of the will, instilled by the Auctor naturae, antecedes practical reason’s apprehension of basic goods. The intellectual acts that spontaneously grasp the basic good follow the natural inclination of the will.

In this view, which I share, the will has “a natural inclination to certain basic ends that is prior to any intellectual grasp of those ends.”

Oscar J. Brown, Leo Elders, and Jan Aertsen, all take similar positions. Brown, following some of the commentators, warns that

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105 While O’Connor is correct to say that the “movements” of the will must follow apprehension, he mistakes natural inclination for actual movement. As explained in Chapter VII, natural inclination is distinct from, and prior to, any sort of motion.

106 Ibid., 60.

107 See Denis J. M. Bradley, Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good: Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas’s Moral Science (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1997); and ibid., “Thomas Aquinas on the Role of Volition in Natural Law Prescriptions,” in Was ist das für den Menschen Gute? Menschliche Natur und Guterlehre, ed. Jan Szaif and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann, 166-90 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter Verlag, 2002). John Finnis’s views are so different from traditional Thomistic thought that one might hesitate to lump him in with Porter, Maritain, et al—as Brock does. According to Brock’s metric, however, it is correct to say that, for Finnis, natural inclinations are in some sense “pre-rational.” Maritain, by contrast, though much closer to a traditional position, is a special case nevertheless, which I address briefly in Chapter VII.

108 Denis J. M. Bradley, “Role of Volition in Natural Law,” citing De ver. q. 22, a. 5, etc.

109 Denis J. M. Bradley, Twofold Human Good, 246.
it is of the utmost importance to distinguish carefully and from the outset between ‘natural desire’ (the nature’s desire) and ‘elicited desire.’ The latter follows upon knowledge and is ‘natural’ only radically and derivatively. Such an elicited tendency ought not, then, to be confused with that desire that is the very tendency of the nature as such.\textsuperscript{110}

For Elders, the knowledge upon which natural appetite follows in beings is that of “the Creator, who placed these inclinations in them [and] knows the objects to which they are directed.”\textsuperscript{111} Aertsen explains that the “natural appetite of the will (\textit{voluntas ut natura}) is the condition of the possibility for performing voluntary acts, the basis of the ‘voluntary appetite.’”\textsuperscript{112}

According to Robert Sullivan—a contemporary (1951) (and antagonist) of William O’Connor—St. Thomas identifies the natural appetite of a thing with the nature itself. Natural appetite is “a relation, and an order, and a proportion.”\textsuperscript{113} Sullivan rejects O’Connor’s analogical understanding of natural appetite:

These words denote a transcendental relation, not an act. . . [N]atural appetite is no more analogical than potency is. In the case of prime matter, the natural appetite for form is merely a transcendental relation. If the word \textit{potency} can be applied to both prime matter and the power which is the will, with the difference that in the latter case the object of the relation is different, and the power is as an act in relation to its substantial subject, so can the term \textit{natural appetite} be applied to both prime matter and the will, retaining the same aspect of transcendental relation, and differing only insofar as the objects of these natural appetites differ, and insofar as the one of them is as a first act in relation to its substantial subject.\textsuperscript{114}

Indeed, as Sullivan notes, St. Thomas says that “[t]he very nature of each thing is a certain inclination implanted in it by the First Mover and ordering it to its due end.”\textsuperscript{115} Natural inclination, in this view, is a relation, not an act or motion:

\begin{quote}
[\textit{R}elation in its own proper meaning signifies only what refers to another. Such regard to another exists sometimes in the nature of things, as in those things which by their own very nature are ordered to each other, and have a mutual inclination; and such relations are
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{110} Oscar J. Brown, \textit{Divine Rectitude}, 38.
\textsuperscript{111} Leo Elders, \textit{Ethics}, 104.
\textsuperscript{113} Robert P. Sullivan, “Natural Necessitation of the Human Will,” \textit{The Thomist} 14 (1951), 524-25.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 525.
\textsuperscript{115} \textit{In XII Meta.}, lect. 2, n. 2634 [Marietti 741].
necessarily real relations; as in a heavy body is found an inclination and order to the centre; and hence there exists in the heavy body a certain respect in regard to the center and the same applies to other things.  

The ontological view of natural appetite is a commonplace in earlier neoscholastic Thomism and, in turn, certain of the great commenters. Charles Dubray, in his article on “Appetite” in the 1907 Catholic Encyclopedia, summarizes this view. As Dubray explains, the scholastic term appetitus is not limited to a psychological meaning. Indeed, natural appetite—as opposed to appetitus elicitus—means “the inclination of a thing to that which is in accord with its nature, without any knowledge of the reason why such a thing is appetible. This tendency originates immediately in the nature of each being, and remotely in God, the author of that nature.”

4. Which solution?

In my view, the traditional Thomistic position of Bradley and others is correct. As St. Thomas repeatedly makes clear, human nature precedes human apprehension. In any creature, natural appetite “is a certain inclination from an interior principle and without cognition.”

As a creature, man has his own proper natural appetite or inclination which is prior to his own

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116 ST I, q. 28, a. 1 [Leon. 4.3.18]: “Ea vero quae dicuntur ad aliquid, significant secundum propriam rationem solum respectum ad alium. Qui quidem respectus aliquando est in ipsa natura rerum; utpote quando aliquae res secundum suam naturam ad invicem ordinatae sunt, et invicem inclinationem habent. Et huiusmodi relationes oportet esse reales. Sicut in corpore gravi est inclinatio et ordo ad locum medium, unde respectus quidam est in ipso gravi respectu loci medii.”

117 For discussion of the commentatorial tradition, see Lawrence Feingold, Natural Desire.


119 ST I-II, q. 6, a. 4: “appetitus naturalis est quaedam inclinatio ab interiori principio et sine cognitione.”
cognition. Even the intellect itself has its own natural inclination prior to cognition—“the natural appetite by which the intellect is inclined to its act.”\textsuperscript{120} Also, as St. Thomas tirelessly explains, the will has its own proper natural inclination prior to any act of appetition. In summary:

Every act of reason and will in us is based on that which is according to nature . . . for every act of reasoning is based on principles that are known naturally, and every act of appetite in respect of the means is derived from the natural appetite in respect of the last end.\textsuperscript{121}

There is nothing about \textit{ST} I-II, q. 94, a. 2 that suggests St. Thomas intends the term \textit{inclinatio naturalis} there to mean something radically different from what he ordinarily means by that term—an inclination of nature, not a supervenient inclination of an appetitive power in operation. Indeed, the plain text, structure, and historical context of q. 94, a. 2 all confirm that his use of the term \textit{inclinatio naturalis} in that text refers to the inclination of the natural appetite, not that of the higher appetites. The first principle of practical reason is that “the good is that which all things seek after (\textit{appetunt}).” St. Thomas of course is not setting forth a principle of moral relativism. The good is determined by nature, which is prior to any apprehension by man. Man has, first, certain natural inclinations from that nature, which natural inclinations are then, second, naturally apprehended by practical reason:

Since . . . good has the nature of an end, and evil, the nature of a contrary, hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{De ver.}, q. 22, a. 12, ad 2 [Leon. 22/3.642:127-30]: “appetitu naturali, quo inclinatur intellectus in suum actum.”

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 91, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.154]: “omnis operatio, rationis et voluntatis derivatur in nobis ab eo quod est secundum naturam, ut supra habitum est [I-II, q. 10, a. 1], nam omnis ratiocinatio derivatur a principiis naturaliter notis, et omnis appetitus eorum quae sunt ad finem, derivatur a naturali appetitu ultimi finis. Et sic etiam oportet quod prima directio actuum nostrorum ad finem, fiat per legem naturali.” Although the will is distinct from nature, it is neverthess “founded” on nature. Cf. \textit{ST} I-II, q. 10, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 6.83]: “voluntas in aliqua natura fundatur.”
Thus the natural inclinations come first, then rational apprehension. For example, every substance, man included, seeks (appetit) the preservation of its own being according to its nature. The human being has this natural inclination from conception onward. In the case of any animal, the sensitive appetite is naturally inclined even before the thing towards which it is naturally inclined is offered to it through senses or imagination. An animal takes one thing in preference to another, because its appetite is naturally determinate to that thing. Wherefore as soon as an animal, whether by its sense or by its imagination, is offered something to which its appetite is naturally inclined, it is moved to that alone, without making any choice. Just as fire is moved upwards and not downwards, without its making any choice.

Likewise, the will has its own proper natural appetite or inclination, which is ontological, not psychological. Bradley explains the natural inclination of the will in terms of the distinction between a power and its act:

Considered as a per se accident or property of the rational soul, the power of will is naturally inclined towards its proper object, the intelligible good in general. The elicited acts of will are intelligent and free movements toward anything that can fall under this ratio—that is, any intelligible but imperfect or finite good. . . . [P]rior to any elicited acts of will, the will is already necessarily inclined towards happiness and anything necessarily contained therein—especially being, life, and understanding.

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122 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “Quia vero bonum habet rationem finis, malum autem rationem contrarii, inde est quod omnia illa ad quae homo habet naturalem inclinationem, ratio naturaliter apprehendit ut bona, et per consequens ut opere prosequenda, et contraria eorum ut mala et vitanda.” This apprehension is “natural” in the sense that it is the act of a power inherent in human nature.

123 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “quaelibet substantia appetit conservationem sui esse secundum suam naturam.”

124 ST I-II, q. 13, a. 2, ad 2: “brutum animal accipit unum prae alio, quia appetitus eius est naturaliter determinatus ad ipsum. Unde statim quando per sensum vel per imaginationem repraesentatur sibi aliquid ad quod naturaliter inclinatur eius appetitus, absque electione in illud solum movetur. Sicut etiam absque electione ignis movetur surfus, et non deorsum.”

Verily, for St. Thomas, the nature which inclines a human being is human nature and each power included within human nature:

Each power of the soul is a form or nature, and has a natural inclination to something. Wherefore each power desires by the natural appetite that object which is suitable to itself. Above which natural appetite is the animal appetite, which follows the apprehension, and by which something is desired not as suitable to this or that power, such as sight for seeing, or sound for hearing; but simply as suitable to the animal.\(^\text{126}\)

O’Connor raises an important point. St. Thomas certainly does say that the inclination to the good is found in different ways in different grades of being. But what O’Connor, and later Brock, overlook is the proper sense of the term *naturalis* as it applies to human operations. While the natural appetite must be *perfected* through acts of apprehension and higher appetite, it is nonetheless the appetite of the nature. As explained in Chapter IV, “natural” means that towards which nature inclines. That towards which nature inclines, in turn, means either (1) that which results from a sufficient principle within a thing, without apprehension; or (2) that towards which nature inclines, even though it must be perfected or actually achieved through acts of apprehension.\(^\text{127}\) In the first category, St. Thomas puts tongues of fire flying upward and the growth and “natural motions” of plants and animals. As O’Connor points out, St. Thomas often uses the term natural appetite in a sense that is confined to the first type of natural inclination.\(^\text{128}\) O’Connor is correct that the natural appetite of man is not limited to the things that take place “automatically” in this way. But

\(^\text{126}\) *ST* I, q. 80, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.282-83]: “unaquaeque potentia animae est quaedam forma seu natura, et habet naturalem inclinationem in aliquid. Unde unaquaeque appetit obiectum sibi conveniens naturali appetitu. Supra quem est appetitus animalis consequens apprehensionem, quo appetitur aliquid non ea ratione qua est conveniens ad actum huius vel illius potentiae, utpote visio ad videndum et audito ad audiendum; sed quia est conveniens simpliciter animali.” See also *De ver.*, q. 25, a. 2, ad 8 [Leon. 22/3.734:237-44]: “concupiscere appetitu animali, ad solam concupiscibilum pertinet; sed concupiscere appetitu naturali, pertinet ad quamlibet potentiam: nam quaelibet potentia animae natura quaedam est, et naturaliter in aliquid inclinatur.”

\(^\text{127}\) See *ST* I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273-74].

\(^\text{128}\) Sometimes Thomas speaks as if natural inclination is only in plants or inanimates, e.g., *ST* I, q. 59, a. 1 [Leon. 5.92].
O’Connor errs in the contrary direction. The naturalness of man’s natural appetite is also precognitive, but in the second sense of “natural,” as something that, in order to be perfected—or, as it were, reduced to actuality—requires acts of apprehension. This is a distinctively animal and human mode of natural inclination, but one in which the “nature aspect” is nevertheless prior to cognition.

In explaining how the natural inclination to virtue remains in the damned, St. Thomas uses the vivid metaphor of the blind man, who has a natural aptitude to vision in the very root of his nature, even though he has no capability for apprehension.129 The damned are still naturally inclined to virtue, not because they once apprehended—or now imagine—it as a good to be pursued, but because the inclination to it is rooted in human nature. Nature shows reason what is good for man. Reason itself is a nature prior to any knowledge. Because man is a rational being, whose natural form is his rational soul, his natural inclination is “to act according to reason.”130 He does not need first to reason in order to be inclined to reason. Those things to which man (already) has a natural inclination are “naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance.”131

129 ST I-II, q. 85, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 7.110]: “etiam in damnatis manet naturalis inclinatio ad virtutem, aliquo non esset in eis remorsus conscientiae. Sed quod non reducatur in actum, contingit quia deest gratia, secundum divinam iustitiam. Sicut etiam in caeco remanet aptitudo ad videndum in ipsa radice naturae, inquantum est animal naturaliter habens visum, sed non reducitur in actum, quia deest causa quae reducere possit formando organum quod requiritur ad videndum.”
130 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.171]: “ad legem naturae pertinet omne illud ad quod homo inclinatur secundum suam naturam. Inclinatur autem unumquodque naturaliter ad operationem sibi convenientem secundum suam formam, sicut ignis ad calefaciendum. Unde cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis, naturalis inclinatio inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem. Et hoc est agere secundum virtutem.”
131 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]: “Quia vero bonum habet rationem finis, malum autem rationem contrarii, inde est quod omnia illa ad quae homo habet naturalem inclinationem, ratio naturaliter apprehendit ut bona, et per consequens ut opere prosequenda, et contraria eorum ut mala et vitanda.”
CHAPTER VII

OPUS NATURAE OPUS INTELLIGENTIAE

There is a very remarkable inclination in human nature, to bestow on external objects the same emotions, which it observes in itself; and to find every where those ideas, which are most present to it. This inclination, 'tis true, is suppressed by a little reflection, and only takes place in children, poets, and the antient philosophers.¹

—David Hume, Treatise of Human Nature

Omnis . . . naturae inclinatio praeexigit aliquam cognitionem quae et finem praestituat, et in finem inclinet, et ea quibus ad finem pervenitur provideat: haec enim sine cognitione fieri non possunt. Propter quod etiam a philosophis dicitur, opus naturae esse opus intelligentiae.

—St. Thomas Aquinas, In III Sent., d. 33, q. 2, a. 5

Introduction: How Can Natural Inclination Be Both Intrinsic and Extrinsic?

As Denis Bradley observes, “Philosophers, especially the New Natural Law theorists, are eager to focus on and defend the strictly human ground of the natural law.”² St. Thomas is perhaps the pre-eminent theorist of the “human,” and humanly natural, ground of natural law.³ In his account, the precepts of the natural law follow upon the order of the natural inclinations in man. But St. Thomas hardly neglects the divine origins of the natural law. Early in his career, he interprets Gratian’s scriptural definition of natural law—that which is contained in the Law and the Gospels—in philosophical terms:

And since even in natural things certain movements are called natural, not that they be from an intrinsic principle, but because they are from a superior moving principle—thus the movements that are caused in the elements by the impress of heavenly bodies are said to be natural . . . therefore those things that are of Divine right are said to be of natural right, because they are caused by the impress and influence of a superior principle, namely God.⁴

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³ “[T]he distinction . . . drawn by Christian theologians between natural law and divine law, and between natural reason and revelation, have given some encouragement to the supposition that ‘natural law’ . . . signifies properties of a purely immanent world (‘nature’) or an intelligence which has not knowledge of, or concern for, the existence of any transcendent (‘supernatural’) uncaused cause.” John Finnis, Natural Law and Natural Rights, 394. As Finnis rightly notes, this supposition is “mere muddle.” Ibid.
⁴ In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968]: “Et quia etiam in rebus naturalibus dicuntur aliqui motus naturales, non quia sint ex principio intrinsecos, sed quia sunt a principio superiori movente, sicut motus
The divine origin of natural law is even more pronounced in his “mature” teaching on natural law in *ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 2, in which he defines the natural law as “the rational creature’s participation in the eternal law.” The principles of natural law are “impressed” (impressa) and “instilled” (indidit) in us by God. God “inclines” man through nature to achieve his ultimate end. God is the divine legislator without whom natural law would not be truly law in the sense that St. Thomas defines law as *lex*, a promulgated ordinance of a lawgiver.

My concern in this chapter is not to resolve broader questions about natural law as law, but instead to examine the relationship, and tension, between the extrinsic and intrinsic aspects of natural inclination. If God “directs” or “inclines” nature “from the outside,” in what way is natural inclination still “natural”—that is, proceeding from an intrinsic principle of motion and rest—not merely violent or mechanical? In what sense does nature itself “act for an end”?

To answer these questions, this chapter addresses the theme of exteriority and natural inclination in seven sections. Section A shows why the extrinsic-versus-intrinsic issue is a philosophical problem. Section B examines the notion of God as an “exterior principle” of human actions. Section C distinguishes natural inclination from its opposite: the extrinsic inclinations of violence (*violentia*) or force (*coactio*). Section D examines the notion of

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qui sunt in elementis ex impressione corporum caelestium, naturales dicuntur... ideo ea quae sunt de jure divino, dicuntur esse de jure naturali, cum sint ex impressione et infusione superioris principii, scilicet Dei.” Cf. *ST* I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 6.60] (“aliquid naturale dupliciter. Uno modo, quia est a natura sicut a principio activo, sicut calefacere est naturale igni. Alio modo, secundum principium passivum, quia scilicet est in natura inclinatio ad recipiendum actionem a principio extrinseco, sicut motus caeli dicitur esse naturalis”); *SCG* II, cap. 30, n. 15 [Leon. 13.339] (inferior bodies have a natural inclination to receive the impression of superior bodies).

5 *ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154]: “participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura.”

6 See *ST* I-II, q. 93, a. 2, s. c. [Leon. 7.165] (*impressa*); q. 91, a. 4, ad 2 [Leon. 7.156] (*inditis*). Cf. *ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154] (*impressio*).

7 See *ST* I-II, q. 90, a. 4 [Leon. 7.152], defining law as a “rationis ordinatio ad bonum commune, ab eo qui curam communitatis habet, promulgata.”
divine direction as “impression” in relation to natural inclination. Section E then distinguishes the teleology of nature from the purposes of merely human art and shows how nature can nevertheless be properly called the “divine art.” Section F investigates whether natural inclination is a motion, a disposition, or form itself. Finally, section G investigates the “intentionality” of natural inclination in the context of divine cognition of the ends of nature.

A. The Problem: Extrinsic vs. Intrinsic

In the natural law literature, natural inclination is often viewed in purely intrinsic terms. Whether teleological or non-teleological, natural inclination is something within the thing inclined: an intrinsic urge or tendency. Even when it is aptly described as a directedness or disposition, the emphasis is on the internal character of the direction or disposition, not on an exterior “director” or “disposer.” However, as discussed in lexicographical terms in Chapter I, St. Thomas’s inclinatio naturalis has an indispensably extrinsic aspect of “being inclined” by an exterior agent that inclines the thing through its nature, even as the thing inclines itself by its nature. For St. Thomas, by contrast, nature intends an end—really, not merely metaphorically. Opus naturae opus intelligentiae. Contrary to Hume’s notion of natural inclination as a naïve projection of human emotions onto nature, St. Thomas quite seriously holds that “a natural inclination cannot be in vain, since God and nature do nothing in vain.”8 One should not be surprised that St. Thomas’s account of nature and natural law involves a robustly theological notion of teleology (that is, theological as pertaining natural theology). But in the parochial context of modern thought, the divine element of St. Thomas’s philosophy of nature becomes, it would seem, a theological “intrusion” that requires

8 In I De caelo, lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 3.47] : “naturalis autem inclinatio non potest esse frustra, quia Deus et natura nihil frustra faciunt.”
explanation. It is an intrusion because either natural theology is confused with revealed
teology (which is deemed to be somehow discredited by the enemies of the Catholic faith)
or natural theology in itself is impermissably “metaphysical.” In the world after Darwin (or
even Bacon), is St. Thomas’s “thick” natural teleology defensible?

Among Thomistic natural law theorists, the approach of some is to bracket theological
or “metaphysical” concerns and focus on practical rationality. These are today’s “followers
of Thomas Aquinas,” in terms of Strauss’s generalization, who account themselves “forced to
accept a fundamental, typically modern dualism of a nonteleological natural science and a
teleological science of man.” But this becomes a sort of “natural law without nature” that
even some of the new natural law theorists now concede is not true to the thought of St.
Thomas himself. This strategy of avoiding fundamental questions about nature, of course,
leaves the question of natural teleology and natural inclination unanswered. Absent God, does
not natural teleology becomes a ridiculous anthropomorphism? Intentional inclining toward
an end, in this case, would indeed seem to be the exclusive preserve of human beings.

1. “Cosmic Teleology” vs. the Problem of Anthropomorphism

Some scholars, expressing a certain embarrassment at texts which show “the sort of
full-blown cosmic teleology expected of Aquinas,” have attempted to present St. Thomas’s
teleology “in a more attractive light,” to use Robert Pasnau’s words. Without “theological

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9 From the manifest disorder of the universe (as described by Hume), Finnis concludes that “direct
speculative questions about the significance, implications, or source of the orderliness of things yield, by
themselves, no clear or orderly answers.” Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* 382. Finnis discusses certain
“speculations” (English sense) of the “theological topic of Eternal Law” and creative causality and concludes
that such things “cannot . . . be rigorously established by philosophical argumentation.” Ibid., 392.
10 Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 8.
11 Pamela Hall, *Narrative and the Natural Law: An Interpretation of Thomistic Ethics*, 16. For
details and an overview of the status of this issue, see ibid., 16ff.
assumptions,” Pasnau argues, it could still be reasonable to speak in terms of natural “purposes” and “functions,” so long as the terms are clearly defined. Pasnau’s preoccupation is to defend St. Thomas against the charge of anthropocentrism—“the dead-end project of explaining nature in terms of concepts that have a place only in human psychology,” as Pasnau describes it—without resorting to “divine purposes” as an explanation of how nature acts for an end. It must be noted, however, that St. Thomas does not project human wanting onto nature; rather, human wanting is the most God-like of all the divinely implanted strivings of nature. For Pasnau, St. Thomas’s account of natural appetite is not anthropomorphic: “Aquinas’s project is precisely the opposite. He is not trying to bring psychology to bear on the rest of nature, but rather to use his general theory of the natural order to understand human beings.”

Anthony Kenny does not so much explain Aquinas’s notion of natural inclination as accept it as fact: “We must first notice that when Aquinas attributes ends or aims (intentiones) to inanimate objects, he is not being crudely anthropomorphic. He is not attributing to stocks [sic] and stones ghostly half-conscious purposes. He insists, and indeed makes it a major step in his argument, that inanimate objects have no consciousness (cognitio), and if he speaks of

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13 Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 180. “One might still speak of agents having natural appetites without invoking a divine plan, and hence still speak of agents acting for an end. Such talk would still make sense in a universe without God, because it could be analyzed in terms of tendencies and dispositions.” Ibid., 208. Pasnau does not explain how “such talk would still make sense” without an intelligence to conceive of the end.

14 See *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 4 [Leon. 22/3.620:82-91]: “[N]atura rationalis, quae est Deo vicinissima, non solum habet inclinationem in aliquid sicut habent inanimata, nec solum movens hanc inclinationem quasi alunde ei determinatam, sicut natura sensibilis; sed ultra hoc habet in potestate ipsam inclinationem, ut non sit ei necessarium inclinari ad appetibile apprehensum, sed possit inclinari vel non inclinari. Et sic ipsa inclinatio non determinatur ei ab alio, sed a se ipsa.”

their natural desires he means simply what he more often says, their natural tendencies
(appetitus).”

Speaking in a modern idiom, Norris Clark attempts to show how intelligence works in
nature. He notes first that only intelligence “can make present a future effect in its
consciousness as a goal to-be-produced and think up appropriate means to achieve this
end.” He accounts for the observed natural inclinations of things as “innate goal-oriented
tendencies [which] are like innate ideas.” Without expressly referring to God, he adds that
these ideas have been somehow “thought up by another and projected into natures which
cannot think their own natural drives.” This (presumably divine) “projection” becomes,
then, “an innate ontological ‘intentionality’ toward a determinate type of effect, which it will
carry out whenever the conditions of the surrounding environment permit.”

James Weisheipl, by contrast, gets to the point. Natural finality can be both properly
natural and unabashedly theological. On natural tendency, he writes:

This is not to say that inanimate beings have consciousness or knowledge of their aim. While
it is true that such terms as ‘aim,’ ‘desire,’ ‘appetite,’ ‘intentionality,’ etc. are primarily used
in the context of human activity, the analogical use of these terms with regard to inanimate
movement does not mean to imply consciousness of aim in the bodies themselves. However,
this aim does imply a Supreme Intelligence which directs natural things. . . . The scholastic
terminology was commonly attacked in the seventeenth century by such men as Bacon,
Boyle, etc. as the expression of animism and anthropomorphism; this was due to a
misconception of analogical usage—a human necessity.

Kenny stresses the facts on the ground, but the texts he cites point expressly to God. E.g., ST I, q. 6, a. 1, ad 2
[Leon. 4.66]: “Quaedam . . . appetitum naturalem habent, absque cognitione, utpote inclinata ad suos fines ab
alio superiore cognoscente.” Kenny does mean “stocks and stones,” as in “gods of wood and stone,” “applied
contemptuously to an idol or a sacred image,” OED, s.v. “stock.”
17 W. Norris Clark, *The One and The Many* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 204.
18 Ibid., 205. In fairness to Clark, he is attempting to explain this difficult doctrine to non-specialists.
19 Ibid.
20 James Weisheipl, *Nature and Motion in the Middle Ages* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University
of America Press, 1985), 22 n. 95. Robert Spaemann, in “The Unrelinquishability of Teleology,” 294, traces
the logic of anthropomorphism critique to its absurd conclusion: “In modernity, anthropomorphic nature has
had to give way to an anthropocentric reduction of nature to pure objectivity. This reduction has now reached
man himself, who has become a pure object of transcendental subjectivity, alienated from the world . . . . The
In section G below, I presume an understanding of St. Thomas’s doctrine of analogy (as set forth in the Introduction) and discuss the notion of divine cognition in relation to natural inclination.

2. Natural Law, Natural “Law,” or Violent Positivity?

In the wake of modern legal philosophy, it is particularly important to distinguish the extrinsic source of natural law from law considered as a pure posit of a sovereign. “Law is the command of the sovereign and is accepted due to fear of sanction,” according to John Austin. Kenneth Pennington seems to pin the blame for modern legal positivism on St. Thomas’s alleged substitution of the term *lex* for *ius*—emphasizing the written order of a sovereign rather than intrinsic rational principles of justice. For St. Thomas, law is certainly a command, albeit one that presupposes reason, proceeds from a rational lawgiver, and is addressed to rational beings. In the case of natural law, the command is given, received, and formulated in, and through, the very nature of man.

resulting relinquishment of the anthropomorphic vision of nature leads man himself to finally become anthropomorphism. However, as a result, anthropomorphism also loses its meaning.”

21 See Kenneth Pennington, “Lex naturalis and Ius naturale,” The Jurist 68 (2008), 591: “I would argue that the shift in terminology that we have traced [from Aquinas] has impoverished natural law thought. *Ius naturale* shifted the emphasis both yesterday and today from a set of precepts, rights, and duties encapsulated in *ius* to positivistic sets of rules and norms, shaped and fashioned according to each person’s belief system, that are and always have been the defining feature of *lex*. Human beings may never agree on universal rules of a *lex naturalis*, but they might agree on universal precepts of a *ius naturale*.” Ibid. 591. Dissenting moral theologians have advanced a similar reading of Thomas’s natural law, e.g., Joseph Fuchs, *Moral Demands and Personal Obligations*, trans. Brian McNeil (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown Univ. Press, 1993), 100 (Thomistic natural law is “positivist”).

22 For St. Thomas, despite the common assumption that law is entirely an extrinsic principle (based on a misreading of *ST* I-II, q. 90, pr. [Leon. 7.149]), even positive law is intrinsic inasmuch as it operates through an “imprint” on the mind of the subject, as Michael Baur points out. Baur, “Law and Natural Law,” 247, citing *ST* I-II, q. 93 a. 5 [Leon. 7.166]; *SCG* III, cap. 114. As Baur explains, “For Aquinas, the term “law” does not denote an externally imposed command or ordinance, but rather a rule or ordering whose effective force in directing individuals to act for the sake of the common good is present within the individual beings thus directed.” Ibid., 244. In accord, Jean Tonneau, “The Teaching of the Thomist Tract on Law,” *The Thomist* 34 (1970) (law is not an exterior principle).
My concern is not with law as such, or with natural law as law, but instead with nature as a subject of law. In a world drained of natural finality, law can only be “heteronomous”—a sort of legislative violence. Laws that are merely imposed from the outside are violent, even if necessary to keep the wicked in check. It is little wonder that the notion of a natural “law” in the modern world seems to be at best a metaphor or at worst an absurdity. It is especially important, therefore, to understand how St. Thomas reconciles extrinsic with the intrinsic at the level of nature as a propaedeutic to understanding how natural law can be true law.

3. Natural Ends or Divine “Purposes”?

If God is acknowledged as the ground of nature and natural law, however, a different concern arises. According to Robert Sokolowski,

> It may be the case that the deletion of natural ends at the beginning of modernity occurred at least in part because ends were understood too simply as God’s purposes, and the theological sense of divine purposes and finalities overrode the natural evidence of the ends of things. It may be that in principle the distinction between ends and purposes was already dissolved in this theological context; natural ends became the purposes of the Creator. But, as Sokolowski goes on to say, “It need not have been so” because, in Thomistic philosophy, properly understood, the natures of things “are not chosen by God; they are

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23 As Baur explains, “If legal directives are not . . . internalized, then they must as a rule be externally imposed on individuals, which is to say that they are “violent” and not internally motivating . . . . For Aquinas, legal directives that have to be externally imposed in this way, simply fail to satisfy what it means to be law.” Baur, Law and Natural Law, 247.


expressions of the divine ideas, which in turn are the divine essence insofar as it can be participated in by creatures.” The natures of things, in this account, have a necessity and an intelligibility of their own, now grounded in the necessity and intelligibility of esse per se subsistens. It would be misleading to assimilate them simply to the kinds of purposes or intentions that are part of human actions.26

A discussion of divine ideas in relation to nature is beyond the scope of this study, but I explore the related notion of divine cognition of the ends of natural inclinations in section G below.27

B. God as Extrinsic Principle

In the prooemium of ST I-II, q. 90, St. Thomas identifies two “exterior principles” of human acts: the devil and God.28 The devil “inclines” man to evil through temptation. God moves man to the good in two ways: he instructs (instruit) man through law and helps (iuvat) him through grace. By the term “exterior” principles here, St. Thomas is distinguishing God and the devil as principles from the intrinsic principles of power and habit.29

Whether law, especially natural law, is intrinsic or extrinsic is hotly debated. As for nature, it would seem to be the very model of an intrinsic principle—a source of motion and rest within the thing. At the same time, nature does not pull itself up by its own bootstraps.

The generation of any thing of a given kind requires a generator. Omne quod movetur ab alio

28 ST I-II, q. 90, pr. [Leon. 7.149]: “Principium … exterius ad malum inclinans est Diabolus, de cuius tentatione in primo dictum est. Principium autem exterius movens ad bonum est Deus, qui et nos instruit per legem ….”
29 See ST I-II, q. 49, pr. [Leon. 6.309]: “Post actus et passiones, considerandum est de principiis humanorum actuum. Et primo, de principiis intrinsecis; secundo, de principiis extrinsecis. Principium autem intrinsecum est potentia et habitus; sed quia de potentii in prima parte [q. 77] dictum est, nunc restat de habitibus considerandum.” On intrinsic versus extrinsic principles in the ST, see Fulvio Di Blasi, “Natural Inclination as Inclination to God,” 340.
movetur. In any event, St. Thomas expressly states that the inclination of nature is “from an extrinsic principle” because all things according to their nature tend toward their proper and natural ends, as directed by the Wisdom which establishes nature. . . . [N]atural appetite, which is nothing other than the inclination of a thing to its natural end, which is from the direction of the one who establishes nature.30

The tension between the exteriority and interiority of natural law is usually discussed in the context of whether natural law is truly law or whether the natural law is “heteronomous” as opposed to truly intrinsic.31 Fulvio Di Blasi distinguishes between the “heteronomy” of law considered as an external principle and the “autonomy” of the natural inclinations, which “make God’s law perfectly autonomous insofar as they exist, as internal principles of movement, in the nature of every created being.”32 Although the Kantian language of “autonomy” and “heteronomy” is foreign to St. Thomas, Di Blasi’s point, as far as it goes, is valid: the natural law becomes the man’s own interior law inasmuch as it is a participation in the external, eternal law. The difference is, in a sense, one of perspective. As St. Thomas says in the prologue to his commentary on the second book of the Sentences, the “philosophers” consider the creature according to its proper nature, whereas the “theologians”

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30 In III Sent., d. 27, q. 1, a. 2 [Moos 3.861]: “omnia secundum suam naturam tendunt in fines proprios et naturales, directa a sapientia instituente natura. . . . appetitum naturalem, qui nihil aliud est quam inclinatione rei in finem suum naturalem qui est ex directione instituentis naturam . . . inclinatio naturalis appetitus est ex principio extrinseco.”


32 Fulvio Di Blasi, “Natural Inclination as Inclination to God,” 343; “‘External principle’—insofar as it indicates the heteronomous character of law—and ‘inclination’—insofar as it indicates the autonomous character of law—are the two key concepts to be understood if one has to correctly frame the issue.” In accord, see John Rziha, Perfecting Human Actions: St. Thomas Aquinas on Human Participation in Eternal Law (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 98 n. 224: “As an exterior principle [law] assists the interior principles of the natural inclinations to perform the proper actions that are necessary for the development of acquired virtue.”
consider it as it proceeds from the first principle (i.e., from God). In any event, natural law, considered as law, is inescapably theological. Josef Pieper links the exteriority of natural law as legal command with the interiority of law as nature:

The eternal law, as the divine command addressed to the whole of reality, is so effective that every natural inclination in creatures is nothing else than its expression bearing witness to and affirming itself. This divine command is so intrinsic to reality that it is actually identical with the interior operation of the nature of things. And the natural law is nothing else than this very inherent directive of all reality insofar as it is recognized and affirmed by man who, through his reason, participates in the eternal law.

Law and nature are thus tightly bound at the level of natural inclination, but nevertheless distinguishable. For fear of falling into occasionalism or reducing nature to divine will, one hastens to maintain the law-nature distinction. But can natural inclination—considered precisely as inclinatio—be neatly relegated to the “natural,” intrinsic column, as considered by the philosophers? As much as some modern Thomists may be “inclined” to do so, the texts testify otherwise. Inclinatio naturalis is as much extrinsic as it is intrinsic—and is arguably first and foremost extrinsic: “God . . . inclines all things and turns them toward Himself as to the ultimate end.”

God as incliner is also a mover of things:

Thus He who gave heaviness to the stone inclined it to be borne downward naturally. In this way the one who begets them is the mover in regard to heavy and light things . . . . It is after this fashion that all natural things are inclined to what is suitable for them.

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33 In II Sent., pr.: “Philosophi enim creaturas considerant, secundum quod in propria natura consistunt; unde proprias causas et passiones rerum inquirunt: sed Theologus considerat creaturas, secundum quod a primo principio exierunt, et in finem ultimum ordinantur qui Deus est.”
34 Josef Pieper, Reality and the Good, 70-71.
35 ST I-II, q. 79, a. 1 [Leon. 7.76]: “Deus . . . omnia inclinat et convertit in seipsum sicut in ultimum finem.”
36 De ver., q. 22, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.613:164-74]: “sicut ille qui dedit lapidi gravitatem, inclinavit ipsum ad hoc quod deorsum naturaliter ferretur; per quem modum generans est motor in gravibus et levibus . . . . Et per hunc modum omnes res naturales, in ea quae eis conveniunt, sunt inclinata, habentia in seipsis aliqul inclinationis principium, ratione cuius eorum inclinatio naturalis est, ita ut quodammodo ipsa vadam, et non solum ducantur in fines debitos.” Even where the motion is attributed “absolutely” to the nature of the thing, as with water’s natural inclination downwards, this natural inclination presupposes the action of the superior agent. See De ver., q. 22, a. 13 [Leon. 22/3.645:143-72].
God “inclines his subjects” in various ways: “Under God, the legislator, diverse creatures have diverse natural inclinations.”

Man’s being placed under (subditus) God is not a purely extrinsic or “heteronomous” imposition on a freestanding nature, “defective” or otherwise. Rather, man is naturally subject to God through participation in the eternal law, through which God impresses upon man his natural inclination to his proper acts and ends. God is Lord (dominus) over man per naturam, not per accidens as one man may be subject to another man. In this way, natural inclination is both extrinsic and intrinsic. The natural inclination is “both from the natural form and from that which gave the form; hence it is said that the motion of fire upward is from its lightness and from the generator that produced such form.” All natures have “within themselves some principle of their inclination in virtue of which that inclination is natural, so that in a way they go themselves and are not merely led to their due ends.” Through natural law, man is moved to the good “from the inside-out,” in Russell Hittinger’s words. The extrinsic character of natural inclination is not somehow “exotic” (foreign) nor a matter of revealed doctrine. For, as St. Thomas explains, of the four causes, final and efficient

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37 ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.158]: “sub Deo legislatore diversae creaturae diversas habent naturales inclinationes, ita ut quod uni est quodammodo lex, alteri sit contra legem, ut si dicam quod furibundum esse est quodammodo lex canis, est autem contra legem ovis vel alterius mansueti animalis.”

38 ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154].


40 De malo, q. 3, a. 3 [Leon. 23.73:224-28]: “Inclinatio autem naturae est et a forma naturali et ab eo quod dedit formam; unde dicitur quod motus ignis sursum est ab eius levitate, et a generante quod talem formam creavit.”

41 De ver., q. 22, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.613:169-74]: “omnes res naturales, in ea quae eis conveniunt, sunt inclinata, habentia in seipsis aliquod inclinationis principium, ratione cuius eorum inclinationi naturalis est, ita ut quodammodo ipsa vadant, et non solum ducantur in fines debitos.”

causes are extrinsic principles “because they are outside of the thing.” As further discussed below (sections F and G), inclination lies between form and end and is, in that way, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Inclination follows upon form (intrinsic) and, at the same time, is an inclining by God toward the thing’s end (extrinsic). In this way, as Hittinger observes, natural law is “extrinsic but internal.”

C. Violence and Nature Distinguished

If natural inclination is from an exterior principle, how is it distinguishable from violence? One could pose the following objection. St. Thomas states that violent motion is from an “exterior principle” and, therefore, “contrary to the nature of a natural inclination.” Therefore, it cannot be said without contradiction that natural inclination is from an exterior principle. Moreover, as Michael Baur argues, “God’s action in moving us is not the transitive action of one being in relation to another, but rather the creative action of God who gives us being in the first place and thus who can never act upon us externally or violently.” The verb inclinare certainly has a transitive meaning, but is God’s inclining of man through nature transitive in the sense of violence or coercion? The answer to this question lies in a basic distinction between violence and nature which St. Thomas explains in several ways:

44 Russell Hittinger, First Grace, 294, n. 58.
45 ST I-II, q. 6, a. 4 [Leon. 6.59]: “actus voluntatis nihil est alius quam inclination quaedam procedens ab interiori principio cognoscendo, sicut appetitus naturalis est quaedam inclination ab interiori principio et sine cognitione. Quod autem est coactus vel violentum, est ab exteriori principio. Unde contra rationem ipsius actus voluntatis est quod sit coactus vel violentus, sicut etiam est contra rationem naturalis inclinationis et motus.” Cf. ST I, q. 59, a. 2, ad 1 [Leon. 5.93] (“corpus naturale per formam substantiale inclinatur in esse suum, sed in exteriori inclination per aliquid additum”); In VII Meta., lect. 8, n. 1442γ [Marietti 424] (“Nisi enim aliquid conferret mobile exteriori agenti, esset motus violentus: violentum enim est, cuius principium est extra, nil conferente vim passo”).
violent motion versus natural motion; necessity of force versus necessity of natural inclination; and governance by fear versus by love.

1. Violent Motion vs. Natural Motion

God’s action on creatures is like violence inasmuch as God is an exterior principle. The powers of nature proceed from the divine power, “which is the principle of nature.” At the same time, nature has a certain integrity. St. Thomas, following Aristotle, sharply distinguishes natural motion, which follows upon an inherent power, from violent motion, which is caused “by something else” (ab alio) impelling the thing moved. The “principle” of violent motion as “outside” (extra) or “exterior” (exterius) relative to the thing moved. Violence is “beyond” (praeter) natural inclination and impedes the natural impetus towards an end. Violence is contrary to a thing’s nature and its “proper inclination,” whether voluntary or natural. Natural inclination, by contrast, is from an “interior principle.” Thus, violence moves a thing towards something “diverse” from “that in which its inclination tends.”

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47 In Iob, cap. 26 [Leon. 26.145:110-12]: “sicut enim motus violentus est a potestate humana, ita inclinatio naturalis est ex virtute divina quae est naturae principium.”
48 In III De caelo, lect. 7, n. 9 [Leon. 3.253]: “Quia id quod naturaliter movetur, habet sibi inditam virtutem, quae est principium motus: unde non oportet quod ab alio impellente moveatur, sicut id quod per violentiam movetur, quia nullam virtutem inditam habet, ad quam sequatur talis motus.”
50 In V Meta., lect. 6, n. 829 [Marietti 270]: “In naturalibus quidem est impetus, sive inclinatio ad aliquem finem, cui respondet voluntas in natura rationali; unde et ipsa naturalis inclinationis appetitus dicitur.”
51 ST II-II, q. 175, a. 1 [Leon. 10.402]; see ST I, q. 82, a. 1 [Leon. 5.293] (“hoc dicimus esse inclinationem rei”); ST I-II, q. 6, a. 4 [Leon. 6.59] (“contra rationem ipsius actus voluntatis est quod sit coactus vel violentus, sicut etiam est contra rationem naturalis inclinationis vel motus”).
52 ST I-II, q. 6, a. 4 [Leon. 6.59]: “appetitus naturalis est quaedam inclination ab interiori principio.”
53 ST II-II, q. 175, a. 1 [Leon. 10.402]: “ille qui rapitur ab aliquo exteriori, rapiatur in aliquud quod est diversum ab eo in quod eius inclinationi tendit.”
which the exterior violent principle is violent.\textsuperscript{54} For example, throwing a stone upward is violent inasmuch as such motion goes against the stone’s natural downward inclination.\textsuperscript{55} In contrast, an animal that does not by nature have eyes cannot be blinded by violence.

In terms of primary and secondary movers, natural and violent movements differ:

In every order of mobile things and of movers, the second movers must be ordained to the end of the first mover by a disposition impressed upon them by the first mover. . . . \textsuperscript{[I]n violent movements the impression left by the first mover on second movers is outside their nature; and therefore the operation following such an impression is difficult and laborious for them.\textsuperscript{56}}

By contrast, in natural movements, the impression made by the first mover on the second movers is a natural cause for those second movers and therefore the operation that follows upon the impression is suitable to the thing: “every thing by the nature divinely implanted in it tends towards that to which it is ordained . . . by the impression it has received.”\textsuperscript{57}

2. \textit{Necessity of Force vs. Necessity of Natural Inclination}

St. Thomas, following St. Augustine, says there are two kinds of necessity: (1) the necessity of force (\textit{coactio}); and (2) the necessity of natural inclination.\textsuperscript{58} Force, in turn, “is

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{In I De caelo}, lect. 17, n. 2 [Leon. 3.68]: “quod non est omnino natum moveri, idest quod nullum motum habet ex sua natura, impossibile est quod moveatur per violentiam. Hoc enim dicimus violentiam pati, quod per vim fortioris agentis removetur a propria inclinatione: si igitur corporibus non inesset aliqua naturalis inclinatio ad quosdam motus, violentia in eis locum non haberet; sicut si animal non esset natum videre, non attribueretur ei caecitas.” The spherical shape of the earth is accounted for by natural inclination, not by the violence of celestial gyrations. See \textit{In II De caelo}, lect. 27, n. 3 [Leon. 3.223]. On nature as the stage for violence, see Antonio Moreno, “The Law of Inertia and the Principle \textit{quidquid movetur ab alio movetur},” \textit{The Thomist} 38 (1974), 324.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{ST} II-II, q. 175, a. 1 [Leon. 10.402]. Throwing the stone downwards faster than free-fall speed is likewise violent. Ibid.: “velocius proiectatur deorsum quam sit motus eius naturalis.” Cf. \textit{ST} I-II, q. 6, a. 4 [Leon. 6.59]: “Potest . . . lapis per violentiam sursum ferri, sed quod iste motus violentus sit ex eius naturali inclinatione, esse non potest.”

\textsuperscript{56} Trans. by William O’Connor, “Natural Appetite,” 367. \textit{In IV Sent.}, d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 1 [Parma 7/2.1191]: “in omni ordine mobilium et motorum oportet secundos mores ordinari in finem primi motoris per dispositionem impressam in eis a primo motore . . . . Sed hoc distat in motibus naturalibus et violentis; quod in motibus violentis impressio relict a primo motore in secundis motoribus est praeter naturam eorum; et ideo operatio consequens ex tali impressione est eis difficilis et laboriosa.”

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.: “unaquaeeque res ex natura sibi divinitus indita tendit in id ad quod per divinam providentiam ordinatur secundum exigentiam impressionis receptae.”

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{De ver.}, q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.623:147-52].
nothing else but the infliction of some violence.” 59 This distinction applies to all grades of being. The stone falls toward the center of the earth by necessity of natural inclination, but moves upward only by force. An animal pursues its prey by natural inclination, but remains in its cage by force. The human will, furthermore, is not subject to the necessity of force, but is subject to the necessity of natural inclination inasmuch as it must will happiness. 60 Divine inclination through nature is not force because things are “inclined from their own forms,” and the inclination of natural things is both from form and from God inasmuch as He gives to all things “the forms and powers inclining toward that to which he Himself moves them, that in such they tend not by force, but as if from within [sponte].” 61 The natural necessity inherent in irrational creatures comes from God in a manner analogous to the archer’s direction of an arrow (which is violent for the arrow), but there is this difference: “that which creatures receive from God is their nature, while that which natural things receive from man in addition to their nature is somewhat violent.” 62

3. Rule by Fear vs. Rule by Love

In relation to the point that creatures are moved through their natures, not by compulsion, St. Thomas frequently cites Wisdom 8:1, where God is said to order creatures

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59 De ver., q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.624:207-08]: “Coactio enim nihil aliud est quam violentiae cuiusdam inductio.”

60 De ver., q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.624:196-222]: “voluntas non necessario aliquid vult necessitate coactionis, vult tamen aliquid necessario necessitate naturalis inclinationis.” Cf. De ver., q. 22, a. 5, ad 1 [Leon. 22/3.624:222-25]: “appetitus beatitudinis non procedit ex aliqua coactione, sed ex naturali inclinatione.”

61 De carit., a. 1 [Marietti 755]: “Deus movet omnia ad suas actiones, ad quas tamen inclinantur ex propriis formis. Et inde est quod omnia disponit suaviter, quia omnibus dat formas et virtutes inclinantes in id ad quod ipse movet, ut in illud tendant non coacte, sed quasi sponte.” Cf. In II De anima, lect. 7, n. 6: “dicitur aliquis sponte facere illud, ad quod extrinseco non inducitur.”

62 ST I, q. 103, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.454] (emphasis added): “id quod creature a Deo recipiunt, est earum natura; quod autem ab homine rebus naturalibus imprimitur praeter earum naturam, ad violentiam pertinet.” See also ST I, q. 105, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 5.474]: “illud quod movetur ab altero dicitur cogi, si movetur contra inclinationem propriam, sed si moveatur ab alo quod sibi dat propriam inclinationem, non dicitur cogi.”
“sweetly” (*suaviter*). As St. Thomas explains, something can be ruled [*principari*] in two ways: through fear and through love. The mode of fear is less effective, because the subjects are always seeking to escape their “yoke of servitude.” The mode of love is the mode of natural inclination, through which God instills a desire for the ultimate end:

> The ultimate of every end is the divine goodness, to which as an end all particular ends are ordained, toward which things are naturally inclined. Thus therefore the natural inclinations themselves of things toward their proper ends, which we say to be natural laws, are a certain birth, i.e., effect, that is sweet, i.e., consonant with natural appetite, an effect . . . by which the divine goodness is loved.

This love is both extrinsic (God’s own love) and intrinsic (man’s natural love for God):

> Which love is divine . . . whether this is understood of the love by which God loves God’s own goodness . . . or whether it is called divine love which is the divinity implanted in all things, through which all things are held by God and which cannot be dissolved, since all things love God from necessity, at least in his effects.

### D. Divine Direction by Impressio: Extrinsic or Intrinsic?

St. Thomas frequently speaks of natural inclination in connection with divine governance or direction of creatures. Two striking—and problematic—images recur in these texts. Divine direction is likened to (1) the archer’s direction of an arrow towards a target; and (2) a “pressing-into” (*impressio*) by God of form (or principle) into the natural things. As St. Thomas says, the shooting (*impulsio*) of the arrow is violent. The archer’s *impressio*
suggests the classical Latin sense of *impressio* as “onset,” “pressing on,” “attack,” or “irruption.”

The divine *impressio* suggest something more like the middle-Latin sense of an image (*sigilla*) imprinted or stamped into a thing, as the seal of a signet ring in wax. Either sense is problematic. As John Wippel points out, the arrow analogy raises a question: “Does Thomas think that the inclination of purely natural agents to their respective ends is simply impressed on them in passing fashion, as it were, by some other, intelligent being?”

Viewed through the lens of a modern, mechanistic understanding of nature, it is easy to interpret St. Thomas’s *impressio* as univocally the same as the violent shooting of the arrow. But Wippel does not read St. Thomas in this narrow way. Instead, he explains, St. Thomas rather has in mind “a permanent inclination which is part of [the natural agent’s]

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68 Lewis & Short, s.v. “*impressio*.”

69 Du Cange, *Glossarium*, s.v. “*impressio*”: “Sigillum, quod in eo impressa sit imago sic dictum, apud Heinc. de Vett. sigill. cap. 2. num. 8. pag. 19: ‘In sigillo minori ecclesiae SS. Simonis et Jудæ Goslariensis cum hac inscriptione: Impressio sci Mathie.’” Deferrari gives several definitions, ranging from a violent physical striking to a stamping or imprinting to an “impression” made on the mind. Schütz’s *Thomas-Lexikon* does not have an entry for *impressio*.


71 Since the Renaissance, “Instead of being an organism, the natural world is a machine: a machine in the literal and proper sense of the word, an arrangement of bodily parts designed and put together and set going for a definite purpose by an intelligent mind outside itself.” R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature*, 5. “We can admire the world as a machine made by the divine builder. Within it, we can only discover the mechanical laws, which God has used. Natural teleology is idolatry, and a mechanical consideration of nature is ‘vindicatio gloriae supremae numinis’ . . .” Robert Spaemann, “The Unrelinquishability of Teleology,” citing J. Chr. Sturmius, *Philosophia eleatica* (Altdorf, 1689), vol. II., 359. St. Thomas uses a number of other terms that also could be mis-read to suggest a quasi-violent imposition upon nature, including *indo* (“impose on,” “attach to” and, in the participle form *inditus*, “placed into,” “thrown upon,” “implanted”), *infixa* (“fastened in,” “imprinted”), *insero* (“stick into,” “instigate”). For *inditus*, see *ST* I, q. 60, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 5.98] (“*inclinatio naturalis est sibi indita ab auctore suae naturae*.”); *ST* I, q. 60, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.98]: *ST* I-II, q. 46, a. 4, ad 2 [Leon. 6.295]; *ST* II-II, q. 23, a. 2 [Leon. 8.165]; *In II Sent.*, d. 42, q. 2, a. 5 [Mand. 2.1085]; *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 1 [Parma 7/2.1191]: *De carit.*, a. 9 [Marietti 777]; *SCG* III, cap. 85, n. 11 [Leon. 14.256]; *Quodliber* I, q. 4, a. 3 [Leon. 25/2.188:51]; *In XII Meta.*, lect. 12, n. 2634 [Marietti 741]; *ST* I-II, q. 106, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 7.274]. For *infixa*, see *In De div. nom.*, cap. 10, lect. 1, n. 857 [Marietti 321]: “lex enim Dei est cui libet creaturae infixam naturalis inclinatio ipsius ad agendum id quod convenit ei secundum naturam.” For *insero*, see *ST* I-II q. 90, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 7.152]: “promulgatio legis naturae est ex hoc ipso quod Deus eam mentibus hominum insersit naturaliter cognoscendam.” For discussion of *insingue* and *instinctus*, see Chapter I. Contrast the foregoing with *insunt* (“there are in”), *SCG* III, cap. 126, n. 3 [Leon. 14.389]: “Naturales inclinationes insunt rebus a Deo, qui cuncta movet.”
very being.” Wippel cites one of many texts that show that, for St. Thomas, things are directed by an intellect that not only acts upon their natures, but also “constitutes” such natures in the first place. Indeed, “to give natural inclinations is [the sole prerogative of] the one who establishes nature.” That is to say, natural things are directed to an end and receive their natural inclinations to that end from the mover (God) from which they receive their forms, powers, and motions. Unlike the archer in relation to the arrow, God bestows upon the natural thing the very form by which it is inclined to move towards its natural end. The stone, for example, does not need to be thrown downwards to seek the center of the earth. By contrast, the bowman’s strong arm, through the bow, does violence to the natural inclination of the arrow, considered as a heavy body, to fall straight down. The stone’s form, for all that it is given by God, is no less its own.

Although the Divine direction of natural things is profoundly different from the archer’s direction, the similarity between the two is worth dwelling upon for a moment to show the intelligent character of natural inclination. In a number of texts, St. Thomas uses the axiom “the work of nature is the work of intelligence” (opus naturae est opus

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72 Wippel, Metaphysical Thought, 484.
73 Ibid., citing In II Sent., d. 25, q. 1, a. 1.
74 SCG III, cap. 88, n. 4 [Leon. 14.269]: “Inclinationes autem naturales dare non est nisi illius qui naturam instituit.” See also In III Sent., d. 27, q. 1, a. 2 [Moos 3.861]: “appetitum naturalem, qui nihil alium est quam inclinationem rei in finem suum naturalem qui est ex directione instituentis naturam.”
75 SCG III, cap. 24, n. 4 [Leon. 14.62]: “Sic igitur non est difficile videre qualiter naturalia corpora cognitione carentia moveantur et agant propter finem. Tendunt enim in finem sicut directa in finem a substantia intelligente . . . . [C]orpora naturalia consequuntur inclinationem in fines naturales ex moventibus naturalibus, ex quibus sortiuntur suas formas et virtutes et motus.”
76 ST II-II, q. 23, a. 2 [Leon. 8.165]: “Deus, qui omnia movet ad debitos fines, singulis rebus indidit formas per quas inclinantur ad fines sibi praestitutos a Deo.”
77 See De malo, q. 3, a. 3 [Leon. 23.73:224-28]: “Inclinatio autem naturae est et a forma naturali et ab eo quod dedit formam; unde dicitur quod motus ignis sursum est ab eius levitate, et a generante quod tales formam creavit.”
This axiom is not original to St. Thomas, but it expresses a basic point in his understanding of natural teleology. Any determinate action for an end presupposes an intelligent first mover:

[It is . . . evident that every working of nature is the work of an intelligent substance, because an effect is more fundamentally attributed to the prime mover, which aims at the end, than to the instruments which have been directed by it. And because of this we find that the workings of nature proceed toward their end in an orderly way, as do the actions of a wise man.]

Nature tends toward a determinate end only “as moved and directed by an intelligent other,” just as the arrow tends to its target at the archer’s direction. This extrinsic intelligent direction is applied to both non-living and living things. Although man directs himself at the level of properly human activity, he is nevertheless directed by God at the level of nature. For example, God directs man to himself through the natural inclination he “places” in the will.

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78 In III Sent., d. 33, q. 2, a. 5 [Moos 3.1069]; De ver., q. 5 a. 2 [Leon. 22/1.144:173-74]; De ver., q. 3, a. 1 [Leon. 22/1.100:203-4]; De pot., q. 1, a. 5 [Marietti 19]; De pot., q. 3, a. 15 [Marietti 83]; In II Phys., lect. 4, n. 6 [Leon. 2.65]. Cf. SCG, III, cap. 24, n. 5 (“opus naturae est opus substantiae intelligentis”).


81 De pot., q. 3, a. 15 [Marietti 83]: “Natura vero tendit in finem sicut mota et directa ab alio intelligente et volente, sicut patet in sagitta, quae tendit in signum determinatum propter directionem sagittantis; et per hunc modum a philosophis dicitur, quod opus naturae est opus intelligentiae.” See also SCG III, cap. 24, n. 4 [Leon. 14.62].

82 In V Meta., lect. 16, n. 1000 [Marietti 315]: “Res . . . inanimatae agunt vel moventur propter finem . . . ab alio diriguntur, qui eis naturalem inclinationem dedit, sicut sagitta dirigitur in finem a sagittante. Res autem irrationales animatae cognoscunt quidem finem et appetunt ipsum appetitu animali . . . determinatur eis ex naturali inclinatione.”
1. Impressio, natura, and inclinatio

For St. Thomas, the divine *impressio* “upon” nature is not a foisting of something foreign upon an already constituted nature. Nor is this divine “imprint” a heteronomous, heavenly inscription upon the *tabula rasa* of nature conceived as pure extention or, still less, a pre-existing stock of “elements.” In an important sense, with respect to each particular kind of thing, the divine *impressio* is itself the nature of the thing:

[A]ll movement which takes place in lower nature because of the impressions of what is higher, whether this be in physical or in spiritual things, is natural according to universal nature, but not according to particular nature unless the impression made on the lower nature by the higher nature is such that the very impression is its nature. Thus, it is clear how the effects which God brings about in creatures can be called according to nature or contrary to nature.\(^{83}\)

At the same time, in at least one text, St. Thomas equates *impressio* with *inclinatio*:

[E]very inclination of anything, whether natural or voluntary, is nothing but a kind of impression from the first mover; as the inclination of the arrow towards a fixed point is nothing but an impulse received from the archer.\(^{84}\)

This equation of *inclinatio* with the *impressio* of an external mover stresses the extrinsic aspect of natural inclination as a divine inclining of the thing. In Matthew Cuddeback’s words, inclination is the “bearer of divine direction.”\(^{85}\) St. Thomas says that the will, for example, is “moved from within, that is, by an interior principle: yet this interior principle may be caused by an exterior principle; and so to be moved from within is not repugnant to being moved by another.”\(^{86}\)

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\(^{83}\) *De ver.*, q. 13, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 22/2.418:206-15]: “omnis motus qui fit in inferiori natura ex impressione superioris, sive in corporalibus sive in spiritualibus, est quidem naturalis secundum naturam universalem, non autem semper secundum naturam particularem; nisi quando a natura superiori sic imprimitur in naturam inferiori, ut ipsa impressio sit eius natura. Et sic patet quomodo ea quae a Deo in creaturis fiunt, possunt dici secundum naturam, vel contra naturam.”

\(^{84}\) *ST* I, q. 103, a. 8 [Leon. 5.461]: “omnis inclinatio alicuius rei vel naturalis vel voluntaria, nihil est aliud quam quaedam impressio a primo movente, sicut inclinatio sagittae ad signum determinatum, nihil aliud est quam quaedam impressio a sagittante.”

\(^{85}\) Matthew Cuddeback, *Light and Form in St. Thomas Aquinas’s Metaphysics of the Knower*, 141.

\(^{86}\) *ST* I, q. 105, a. 4, ad 2 [Leon. 5.474].
More typically, St. Thomas uses *inclinatio* with respect to the inclination that flows from the divine impression: “all things participate in somewhat the eternal law, namely insofar as, from [God’s] impression, they have inclinations to their proper acts and ends.”

St. Thomas also emphasizes the exteriority of the divine *impressio* in terms of the natural necessity inherent in things which act for a determinate end. This necessity is “a kind of impression from God, directing them to their end; as the necessity whereby an arrow is moved so as to fly towards a certain point is an impression from the archer, and not from the arrow.” But St. Thomas points out a radical difference between the divine and the toxophilitic *impressio*. The creature receives its very nature from God, while the arrow receives only violence from the archer. Thus, natural necessity is a sign of God’s action, whereas the “violent necessity in the movement of the arrow shows the action of the archer.”

2. Divine inclining, natural inclination

As Wippel writes, “unless we recognize the need for an end to influence an agent in its action, we will be unable to account for the fact that the agent produces a determined effect or, indeed, that it acts at all.” Modern thought at first attempts to radically simplify the teleology of nature by reducing the world from organism to machine and attributing the intentionality of nature entirely (univocally) to God, conceived as a sort of divine

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87 *ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154]: “omnia participant aliqualiter legem aeternam, inquantum scilicet ex impressione eius habent inclinationes in proprios actus et fines.”

88 *ST* I, q. 103, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.454]: “necessitas naturalis inhaerens rebus quae determinantur ad unum, est impressio quaedam Dei dirigentis ad finem, sicut necessitas qua sagitta agitur ut ad certum signum tendat, est impressio sagittantis, et non sagittae.”

89 Ibid.: “necessitas violentiae in motu sagittae demonstrat sagittantis directionem.”

90 Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought*, 482.
clockmaker.\textsuperscript{91} Collingwood sees an opposition between Greek natural teleology and
Renaissance horopoieticotheology:

The Renaissance thinkers, like the Greeks, saw in the orderliness of the natural world an
expression of intelligence: but for the Greeks this intelligence was nature’s own intelligence,
for the Renaissance thinkers it was the intelligence of something other than nature: the divine
creator and ruler of nature.\textsuperscript{92}

St. Thomas would have none of this. The extrinsic directing and impressing by God and the
intrinsic tending of nature as a source of its own operations converge in the language and
concept of natural inclination: “natural desire is nothing else than an inclination inhering in
things from the ordination of the first mover.”\textsuperscript{93}

Although my concern is not to address Aristotle’s understanding of nature, James
Weisheipl makes an important point about St. Thomas’s reception of Aristotle’s
philosophical account of nature. For St. Thomas, Weisheipl observes, nature has a certain
“innate intentionality or directedness toward some specific end that is attained ‘ut in
pluribus’.” Proceeding under the light of faith in God understood as creator, he clearly
distinguishes the divine intelligence from nature itself and, as it were, reads Aristotle in a
way that supports his natural theology: “Thomas finds no difficulty in relating Aristotle’s
doctrine of ‘nature’ in Book II of the \textit{Physics} with Aristotle’s Separated Intelligence in Book
VIII: ‘ut sic opus naturae videatur opus intelligentiae.’”\textsuperscript{94} Whatever Aristotle’s actual
understanding might be regarding the locus of the intelligence which conceives of the ends of

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{93} \textit{In I Ethic.}, lect. 2, n. 3 [Leon. 47/1.8:44-46]: “naturale desiderium nihil aliud est quam inclinatio
inhaerens rebus ex ordinatione primi moventis.”
\textsuperscript{94} James Weisheipl, “\textit{Opus naturae},” 446-47, citing \textit{In II Phys.}, lect. 4, n. 6 [Leon. 2.65].
\end{flushright}
nature, St. Thomas certainly provides a robust account of natural teleology as a participation in the Divine ideas.\(^{95}\)

St. Thomas, in one text, calls natural inclination “something divine” (\textit{quiddam divinum}), not in the sense that natural inclination itself is God, but rather that it is from God—i.e., “depends on the first principle.”\(^{96}\) For a natural thing to be directed (\textit{directa}) by God is not merely to be driven (\textit{impellitur}) or led (\textit{ducta}) in a mechanical fashion. Here again, St. Thomas distinguishes the arrow from the nature. A thing can be directed to a definite end in two ways:

\begin{itemize}
  \item [1] Sometimes what is directed to an end is merely driven (\textit{impellitur}) or moved by the one directing it without acquiring from the director any form by which such a direction or inclination belongs to it. Such an inclination, like that by which the arrow is aimed by the archer at a definite target, is violent.
  \item [2] Sometimes what is directed or inclined to an end acquires from the director or mover some form by which such an inclination belongs to it. In that case the inclination will be natural, having a natural principle.\(^{97}\)
\end{itemize}

A stone’s natural inclination to seek the center of the earth is an example of the second, natural mode of direction. Here St. Thomas uses the transitive “inclined” (\textit{inclinavit}) even as the stone, of its own natural form, inclines itself: “Thus He who gave heaviness to the stone

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\(^{95}\) William O’Connor, \textit{Eternal Quest}, 102, claims that St. Thomas “closes a gap that Aristotle was not able to close between nature and the intelligence that governs and controls the movements of nature.”

\(^{96}\) \textit{In VII Ethic.}, lect. 13, n. 14 \[Leon. 47/2.433:163-8\]: “omnes homines natura scire desiderant. Et hoc contingit, quia omnia habent naturaliter in se ipsis quoddam divinum, scilicet inclinationem naturae, quae dependet ex principio primo; vel etiam ipsam formam, quae est huius inclinationis principium.” \textit{Divinum} here is from the Moerbeke translation of Aristotle’s text: “Omnia enim natura habent quoddam divinum.” Cf. \textit{Phys.} 1.7 where Aristotle says form is something divine. See Lawrence Dewan, \textit{St. Thomas on Form as Something Divine in Things} (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2007). Deferrari, following Schütz, lists several analogous senses of \textit{divinum} as referring to something other than God himself: “becoming to God, belonging to God . . . proceeding from God, leading to God, like unto God.” E.g., \textit{In III De cael.}, lect. 2, n. 2 \[Leon. 3.232\] (“\textit{forma autem est quoddam divinum in rebus, inquantum est quaedam participatio primi actus}”); \textit{In I Ethic.}, lect. 14, n. 5 \[Leon. 47/1.51:74-76\] (“\textit{non enim dicitur aliquid divinum propter hoc solum, quia est a Deo, sed etiam quia nos Deo assimilat propter excellential bonitatis}”).

\(^{97}\) \textit{De ver.}, q. 22, a. 1 \[Leon. 22/3.613:153-59\]: “\textit{quandoque enim id quod dirigitur in finem, solummodo impellitur et movetur a dirigente, sine hoc quod aliquam formam a dirigente consequatur per quem ei competat talis directio vel inclinatio; et talis inclinatio est violenta, sicut sagitta inclinatur a sagittante ad signum determinatum. Aliquando autem id quod dirigitur vel inclinatur in finem, consequitur a dirigente vel movente aliquam formam per quam sibi talis inclinatio competat: unde et talis inclinatio erit naturalis, quasi habens principium naturale}.”
inclined it to be borne downward naturally.”\textsuperscript{98} The difference between natural and violent direction is the difference between, on one hand, being inclined (from without) to strive (from within) for something and, on the other hand, being merely dragged along:

If all things were inclined to good without having within themselves any principle of inclination, they could be said to be led (ducta) to good, but not to be tending (appetentia) toward it. But in virtue of an innate principle all things are said to tend to good as if reaching for it of their own accord.\textsuperscript{99}

In a manner of speaking, St. Thomas can say that natural things “go themselves and are not merely led to their due ends . . . inasmuch as they cooperate with the one inclining and directing them through a principle implanted in them.”\textsuperscript{100} According to Gustafson, in St. Thomas’s account of natural inclination versus violence through natural inclination, “mechanism and purpose are reconciled.”\textsuperscript{101} If, by “mechanism,” he means the Renaissance world-machine set in motion by the divine intelligence and, by “purpose,” he means the intrinsic tendency towards determinate ends (not mere “purposes” in the psychological sense), Gustafson’s point is apt. More precisely, one could say that it is through natural inclination that extrinsic and intrinsic finality are reconciled.

E. Divine Art

Where St. Thomas’s treatment of divine direction shows the distinction between nature and violence, his notion of divine art brings to light another important distinction:

\textsuperscript{98} De ver., q. 22, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.613:164-65]: “sicut ille qui dedit lapidi gravitatem, inclinavit ipsum ad hoc quod deorsum naturaliter feretur.”
\textsuperscript{99} De ver., q. 22, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.613-14:169-203]: “Si enim essent omnia inclinata in bonum sine hoc quod haberent in se aliquod inclinationis principium, possent dici ducta in bonum sed non appetentia bonum; sed ratione inditi principii dicuntur omnia appetere bonum quasi sponte tendentia in bonum.”
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid.: ipsa vadant, et non solum ducantur in fines debitos . . . in quantum cooperantur inclinanti et dirigenti per principium eis inditum.”
\textsuperscript{101} Gustaf Gustafson, \textit{Natural Appetency}, 84.
between nature and (merely human) art. Nature only seems at first to be a sort of divine violence, but it is in truth the divine art in the highest sense of art—summa ars. Natural things are “ordered by the highest art” to their natural ends. Certain modern reductionist philosophies predicate art univocally of both man and God. According to Hobbes:

Nature (the Art whereby God hath made and governs the World) is by the Art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an Artificial Animal. For seeing life is but a motion of Limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principall part within; why may we not say, that all Automata (Engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the Heart, but a Spring; and the Nerves, but so many Strings; and the Joynts, but so many wheels, giving motion to the whole body, such as was intended by the Artificer

For St. Thomas, as for Aristotle, Hobbes’s approach would be exactly the wrong way to understand art vis-à-vis nature. For St. Thomas, “art and nature differ, since art is the principle of acting [which principle is] in another, whereas nature is the principle of action

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102 By art (ars), Thomas usually means the various mechanical arts. Examples include shipbuilding, clockmaking, and other works of human ingenuity. E.g., ST I-II, q. 13, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 6.99]: “Et idem apparens in motibus horologiorum, et omnium ingeniorum humanorum, quae arte fiunt.”

103 ST I-II, q. 13, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 6.100]: “a summa arte ordinatos.”

104 Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 9. This passage is at the very beginning of the work’s introduction. Contemporary “intelligent design” theorists, though having the good sense to question Darwinism conflated into a philosophy, seem to share the same basic approach as Hobbes, as later articulated by William Paley. On the difference between the natural philosophy of William Paley (and similar “deists”) and Thomas’s teleology, see Anthony J. Lisska, Aquinas ’s Theory of Natural Law: An Analytic Reconstruction (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 99; and Jean Porter. Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), 86-89. But the issue here is not simply whether there is a divine intelligence at work in nature in some way. The modern elimination of the distinction between art and nature is signals a collapsing of the distinction between our participated knowledge of nature and God’s creative knowledge of nature. “Divine art” is an analogical predication. But we do not know nature in the same way that we know our own arts. For Descartes, by contrast, the analogy of art is reduced to univocity, and we come face to face with nature in the distinct light of reason: “[A]so soon as I had acquired some general notions concerning Physics . . . they caused me to see that it is possible to attain knowledge which is very useful in life, and that . . . we may find a practical philosophy by means of which, knowing the force and the actions of fire, water, air, the stars, heavens and all other bodies that environ us, as distinctly as we know the different crafts of our artisans, we can in the same way employ them in all those uses to which they are adapted, and thus render ourselves masters and possessors of nature.” Discourse on Method, VI. Thus praxis, one might say, turns upon and enslaves theoria, its source and (former) master. On the “revenge of Martha upon Mary” see Etienne Gilson, From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again, trans. John Lyon (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 18-19.
and motion in that in which it is.” Nature is in the very thing of which it is a principle, while art “is not in the artifact.” In other words, nature and art “seem to differ in nothing except that nature is an intrinsic principle and art is an extrinsic principle.” Moreover, “art presupposes nature” as, in turn, “nature presupposes God.” Nature is not art; nor is art nature’s principle. Art, at best, imitates nature and, in a way, perfects nature by adding to it what nature by itself cannot do—e.g., as medicine helps nature to heal. Art is also similar in a way to violence in that the source of motion of the thing worked on by the artisan is from without. St. Thomas thus distinguishes between natural agency and artisanal instrumentality. The hatchet in the hands of the artisan is only an instrument, which must be forced to perform its work. But natural things, by their own forms and powers, are inclined to act from within themselves, not as forced.

But if the only difference between art and nature is that art is extrinsic, how then can contradiction between, on one hand, making the extrinsic-intrinsic the distinction between art

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105 In XII Meta., lect. 3, n. 2444 [Marietti 691]: “differt autem ars a natura, quia ars est principium agendi in alio, natura autem est principium actionis et motus in eo, in quo est.”

106 In VII Meta., lect. 6, n. 1381 [Marietti 410]: “natura enim est prncipium motus in eo, in quo est, ars vero non est in artificiato, quod fit per artem, sed in alio.” Cf. In I Post an., lect. 1; In II Phys., lect. 14, n. 8 [Leon. 2.96].

107 In II Phys., lect. 14, n. 8 [Leon. 2.96]: “In nullo enim alio natura ab arte videtur differe, nisi quia natura est principium intrinsecum, et ars est principium extrinsecum.”

108 De pot., q. 3, a. 7, s.c. 2 [Marietti 56]: “sicut ars praeposponit naturam, ita natura praesupponit Deum. Sed in operatione artis operatur natura; non enim sine operatione naturae, artis operatio efficitur, sicut igne emollitur ferrum ut percussione fabri extendatur.”

109 De pot., q. 6, a. 3 [Marietti 166]: “Producere autem alienum effectum quem vel natura producere non potest, vel non ita conveniendem, mediante actione principiorum naturalium, artis est. Unde . . . ars imitatur naturam, et quaedam perficit quae natura facere non potest, inquibusdam etiam naturam iuvat; sicut medicus iuvat naturam ad sanandum, alterando et digerendo per appositionem eorum quae ad hoc naturalem virtutem habent.”

110 De carit., a. 1 [Marietti 755]: “Omne enim agens quod non agit secundum formam propriet, sed solum secundum quod est motum ab alieno, est agens instrumentaliter tantum; sicut secures agit prout est motum ab artifici. . . . [S]icut Deus movet omnia ad suas actiones, ad quas tamen inclinatur ex propriis formis. . . . [O]nnibus dat formas et virtutes inclinantibus in id ad quod ipse movet, ut in illud tendeant non coacte, sed quasi sponte.”
and nature and, on the other hand, identifying nature with the Divine art. The bridge between nature and Divine art is a certain similarity:

For nature seems to differ from art only because nature is an intrinsic principle and art is an extrinsic principle. For if the art of ship building were intrinsic to wood, a ship would have been made by nature in the same way as it is made by art. And this is most obvious in the art which is in that which is moved, although per accidens, such as in the doctor who cures himself. For nature is very similar to this art. Hence, it is clear that nature is nothing but a certain kind of art, i.e., the divine art, impressed upon things, by which these things are moved to a determinate end. It is as if the shipbuilder were able to give to timbers that by which they would move themselves to take the form of a ship.\[111\]

The similarity between human and divine art is analogical: “Now as artificial things are in comparison to human art, so are all natural things in comparison to the Divine art.”\[112\] The analogy is that of proper proportionality, not metaphor, because art (though of very different kinds) is properly in both man and God. The analogy lies in the similarity of the divine and human intellects in relation to their products:

\[O\]f the things that come into being from God the proper model (ratio) is in the divine intellect, as was shown above. Now, the model in the mind of the maker of the thing to be made is art. Hence, the Philosopher says in Ethics VI [4] that “art is the true model of things to be made.” Art, then, is properly in God.\[113\]

But the ratio in the artist’s mind is not simply a static “blueprint” of, say, a house. It can be, in part, a blueprint of sorts in the case of a house or chair, or, in the case of Divine art, the structure of crystal or the morphology of a gazelle’s hind leg. But this ratio is richer—it is

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\[111\] In II Phys., lect. 14, n. 8 [Leon. 2.95]: “In nullo enim alio natura ab arte videtur differre, nisi quia natura est principium intrinsecum, et ars est principium extrinsecum. Si enim ars factiva navis esset intrinseca ligno, facta fuisse navis a natura, sicut modo fit ab arte. Et hoc maxime manifestum est in arte quae est in eo quod movetur, licet per accidens, sicut de medico qui medicatur se ipsum: huic arti enim maxime assimilatur natura. Unde patet quod natura nihil est aliud quam ratio cuiusdam artis, scilicet divinae, indita rebus, qua ipsae res moventur ad finem determinatum: sicut si artifex factor navis posset lignis tribuere, quod ex se ipsis moverentur ad navis formam inducendam.” For discussion of this text in relation to contemporary scientific knowledge on the self-organizing characteristics of nature, see Mariano Artigas, The Mind of the Universe: Understanding Science and Religion (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2000), 156.

\[112\] ST I-II, q. 13, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 6.100]. “Sicut autem comparantur artificialia ad artem humanam, ita comparantur omnia naturalia ad artem divinam.”

\[113\] SCG I, cap. 93 [Leon. 13.254]: “Eorum omnium quae a Deo in esse procedunt, ratio propria in divino intellectu est, ut supra ostensum est. Ratio autem rei fiendae in mente facientis ars est: unde philosophus dicit, in VI Ethic., quod ars est recta ratio factibilium. Est igitur proprie ars in Deo.”
a principle of order, not only of parts *ad invicem*, but also of a thing towards its end. The chair has a purpose—to be sat upon. Nor is a pocket-watch’s purpose simply to serve as a fetching fob-bauble. It must be wound up and then move (i.e., “run”) to tell time. Likewise, natural things have their characteristic ends and operations. They are *ordered* to those ends and operations not in the manner of human art—imposed from without upon natural materials—but instead from within, through natural inclination:

And accordingly order is to be seen in things moved by nature, just as in things moved by reason . . . . And thus it is that in the works of irrational animals we notice certain marks of sagacity, insofar as they have a natural inclination to set about their actions in a most orderly manner through being ordained by the Supreme art.\(^{114}\)

St. Thomas only infrequently uses the term *inclinatio* with respect to human art.\(^{115}\) The artist’s inclining is not intrinsically artistic; it is, rather, a violent inclination put to the artist’s purpose.

Although the divine and human arts are analogous, we see that divine art and human art stand in a very different way with respect to nature. The soul is in a way all things, but it receives its plenitude of being from the things it knows. Human knowledge, including art, is caused by things, but the cause, in turn, of those things is the divine intellect through its knowledge. The divine intellect is to things as things are to the human intellect.\(^{116}\) Human art

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\(^{114}\) *ST* I-II, q. 13, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 6.100]: “apparet in his quae moventur secundum naturam, sicut et in his quae moventur per rationem . . . . Et ex hoc contingit quod in operibus brutorum animalium apparent quaedam sagacitates, inquantum habent inclinationem naturalem ad quosdam ordinatissimos processus, utpote a summa arte ordinatos.”

\(^{115}\) See, e.g., *In II Ethic.*, lect. 6, n. 11 [Leon. 47/1.96:158-59] (“ars non inclinat ad bonum usum artis”); *De ver.*, q. 23, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.653:161-64] (“Si enim arca quae est in mente artificis, esset forma materialis habens determinatum esse, non inclinaret nisi secundum modum suum determinatum quem haberet”). In one text, he speaks of certain arts (e.g., the dark art of necromancy) as inclining their possessors to sin: *In II Sent.*, d. 39, q. 1, a. 2, ad 5: “artes iliae non sunt prohibita secundum quod tantum in cogitatione stant, sed per accidentis, inquantum sunt occasio peccandi, secundum quod notitia artis disponit et inclinat ad usum artis.”

\(^{116}\) *SCG* I, cap. 61 [Leon. 13.175]: “Scientia intellectus humani a rebus quoddammodo causatur. . . . Intellectus autem divinus per suam scientiam est causa rerum. Unde oportet quod scientia eius sit mensura
is the cause of human artifacts only in a limited way. The carpenter makes the chair, and the miller cuts the lumber to size, but neither makes the wood. In both cases, the craftsman’s knowledge is the measure of the perfection of the artifact.

The artifact is perfect to the extent it matches or carries out the “specifications,” as it were, of the idea in the mind of the artisan. The divine intellect’s “knowledge is the measure of things, in the same way as an art is the measure of artifacts, each one of which is perfect insofar as it agrees with the art.” Fault (peccatum) occurs “both in those things which are according to nature and in those according to art when nature or art does not attain the end for which it acts.” The natural operation and the product of art alike fall short of its end when “it deviates [declinatur] from the measure or rule of proper operation.”

But again, the sphere of human artifact is bounded by nature. In other words, “[human] art presupposes nature” as, in turn, “nature [i.e., divine art] presupposes God.” Divine art encompasses the entirety of nature: “all creatures are related to God as art products are to an artist.” Importantly, St. Thomas identifies the rule of the divine art with natural inclination. The “measure or rule of proper operation . . . in natural things is the natural inclination itself that follows on the form, but in works of art it is the very rule (regula) of

rerum: sicut ars et mensura artificiatorum, quorum unumquodque in tantum perfectum est inquantum arti concordat. Talis igitur est comparatio intellectus divini ad res qualis rerum ad intellectum humanum.”

117 Ibid. Likewise, SCG I, cap. 66 [Leon. 13.184]: “Cognitio divini intellectus comparatur ad res alias sicut cognitio artificis ad artificiata: cum per suam scientiam sit causa rerum.”

118 De malo, q. 2, a. 1 [Leon. 23.29:175-85]: “peccatum . . . contingit et in his quae sunt secundum naturam, et in his quae sunt secundum artem, quando non consequitur finem natura vel ars, propter quem operatur. Quod autem finem non consequatur operans per artem vel per naturam contingit ex hoc quod declinatur a mensura vel regula debitae operationis; quae quidem in naturalibus est ipsa naturae inclinationio, consequens aliquam formam; in artificialibus vero est ipsa regula artis.”

119 Ibid.

120 De pot., q. 3, a. 7, s.c. 2 [Marietti 56]: “sicut ars praesupponit naturam, ita natura praesupponit Deum. Sed in operatione artis operatur natura; non enim sine operatione naturae, artis operatio efficitur, sicut igne emollitur ferrum ut percussione fabri extendatur.”

121 SCG III, cap. 100, n. [Leon. 14.311]: “Omnes creaturae comparantur ad Deum sicut artificiata ad artificem. Unde tota natura est sicut quoddam artificiatum divinae artis.”
Similarly, law is a rule and measure of human acts, which is in both the lawgiver (ruler and measurer) and the subject (ruled and measured). Man’s natural reason is a ruled rule and a measured measure. He is ruled and measured through natural inclination. Through his participation in the eternal law, man has his natural inclinations to his due acts and ends.

In his commentary on St. Paul’s query, “Does not nature itself teach you?” (I Cor. 11:14), St. Thomas speaks of the extrinsic and intrinsic character of nature as a source of knowledge for man.

By ‘nature’ [St. Paul] means the “natural inclination” in women to take care of their hair, which is a natural veil, but not in men. This inclination is shown to be natural, because it is found in the majority. But it is taught [doceri] by nature, because it is a work of God; just as in a picture one is instructed [instruitur] about the skill of the artist.

A portrait not only conveys the thing depicted; it also teaches about the skill of a painter. Analogously, nature teaches us and through nature God instructs us. The same duality plays out in St. Thomas’s discussion of natural law in the Summa theologiae. We see in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, for example, that, intrinsically, “nature has taught all animals” (natura omnia animalia docuit) to mate and educate through the natural inclinations man has in common with the other animals. Extrinsically, “the exterior principle moving [man] to the good is

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122 De malo, q. 2, a. 1 [Leon. 23.29:182-85]: “mensura vel regula debitae operationis; quae quidem in naturalibus est ipsa naturae inclinatio, consequens aliquam formam; in artificialibus vero est ipsa regula artis.”

123 ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154]: “lex, cum sit regula et mensura, dupliciter potest esse in aliquo, uno modo, sicut in regulante et mensurante; alio modo, sicut in regulato et mensurato, quia inquantum participat aliquid de regula vel mensura, sic regulatur vel mensuratur. Unde cum omnia quae divinae providentiae subduntur, a lege aeterna regulantur et mensurentur, ut ex dictis patet; manifestum est quod omnia participant aliquidem aeternam legem, inquantum seictum ex impressione eius habent inclinationes in proprios actus et fines.”

124 In I Cor. [rep. vulg.], cap. 11, lect. 3, n. 619 [Marietti, 1.619]: “dicit nec ipsa natura docet vos. Et vocat hic naturam ipsam inclinationem naturalem, quae est mulieribus ad nutriendum comam, quae est naturale velamen, non autem viris. Quae quidem inclinationi naturalis esse ostenditur, quia in pluribus inventur. Oportet autem ab ipsa natura doceri, quia est Dei opus: sicut in pictura instruitur aliquid artificio pictoris.”
God, who instructs us through law”—including natural law.\textsuperscript{125}

St. Thomas develops his doctrine of divine art under the light of faith and in accord with tradition. At the same time it is an extension of Aristotle’s account of art. St. Thomas does not hesitate to link Aristotle’s accounts of natural teleology and art:

\textit{[T]he Philosopher says in }\textit{Ethics} VI that “art is the true model of things to be made.” Art, then, is properly in God. And therefore it is said in Wisdom (7:21): “the artisan of all things has taught me wisdom.”\textsuperscript{126}

As George Klubertanz observes, “St. Thomas carries the Aristotelian ideas of nature, activity, and goal-directedness further . . . by considering all natural things as products of the Divine Art.”

\textit{F. Inclinatio Naturalis and the Principles of Nature}

The basic question raised at the outset of this study is this: What is a natural inclination? Prior chapters investigated the proper sense of the terms \textit{inclinatio} and \textit{natura}, and have drawn a number of critical distinctions between natural inclinations and inclinations of passion and habit. In this chapter, my concern is to reconcile the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of natural inclination. So far, I have distinguished the exteriority of natural inclination from that of violence and art. To complete the task, it is now necessary to descend into the heart of St. Thomas’s account of natural action and motion. In these last two parts of this chapter, after a brief discussion of the principles of nature, I distinguish \textit{inclinatio naturalis} from motion and show how it stands in relation to form (intrinsic principle) and motion. Next

\textsuperscript{125} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 90, pr. [Leon. 7.149]: “Principium autem exterius movens ad bonum est Deus, qui et nos instruit per legem.”

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{SCG} I, cap. 93 [Leon. 13.254]: “philosophus dicit, in VI Ethic., quod ars est recta ratio factibilium. Est igitur proprie ars in Deo. Et ideo dicitur Sap. 7-21: omnium artifex docuit me sapientiam.”
and finally (section G), I show how natural inclination is related to final cause (extrinsic principle).

1. Principles of Nature

St. Thomas accepts Aristotle’s definition of nature as “the principle of motion and of rest in that to which it belongs essentially and primarily and not accidentally.” Also from Aristotle, St. Thomas takes the doctrine of the four causes or principles of nature. Two causes are intrinsic: material and formal. The other two are extrinsic: efficient and final causes. As noted in Chapter III, “nature” can mean matter or form, and natural inclination can be according to the bodily complexion of an individual or the specific form. Having shown there that natural inclination in the sense relevant to this study is the inclination of natural form, I shall now focus on formal and final causes. Those things are said to be “according to nature which are moved continuously by some intrinsic principle until they arrive at some end—not to some contingent end, and not from any principle to any end, but from a determinate principle to a determinate end.” Where in this process does natural inclination fit? Is natural inclination identical to form, end, or something in between?

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127 De ver., q. 12, a. 3, ad 16: “natura est principium motus et quietis in eo in quo est, per se, et non secundum accidens.” Cf. In II Phys., lect. 1, n. 5 [Leon. 2.56]: “natura nihil aliud est quam principium motus et quietis in eo in quo est primo et per se et non secundum accidens.”

128 De princ. nat., cap. 3 [Leon. 43.42:48-52] “Materia et forma dicitur intrinsecae rei, eo quod sunt partes constituentes rem; efficiens et finalis dicitur extrinsecae, quia sunt extra rem. Sed principia accipit solum causas intrinsecas.”

129 Efficient causality in relation to the notion of inclinatio as “inclining” would be worthy of further discussion.

130 Pasnau trans., 178-179. In II Phys., lect. 14, n. 7 [Leon. 2.95]: “Haec . . . dicitur esse secundum naturam, quaecumque ab aliquo principio intrinseco moventur continue, quousque perveniant ad aliquem finem; non in quocumque contingens, neque a quocumque principio in quicumque finem, sed a determinato principio in determinatum finem: semper enim ab eodem principio proceditur in eundem finem, nisi aliquid impediat.”
2. Inclinatio naturalis: Nature Itself?

As discussed in Chapter VI, natural inclination at all levels is ontological, not psychological. As a threshold matter, it is worth considering whether natural inclination is nothing but the being or nature itself. In one text, St. Thomas says that “the very nature of each thing is a certain inclination implanted in it by the first mover ordering it to its due end.”

But he does not typically identify inclination with nature simply. The natural inclination is, perhaps, the nature considered in relation to its end. The inclination pertains to the “weight and order,” as it were, of a thing towards its good.

According to William Wallace, “natural appetite is not conceived as a reality in a thing distinct from its nature; it is rather the nature itself conceived in terms of tendency to be and to operate.” Similarly, Robert Sullivan writes, “natural appetite, in the case of the will, is not really distinct from the will itself, but is the will considered as ordered or transcendentally related to its proper object by its Maker.” In other words, the appetite is the will itself “considered as having, prior to human cognition and to its elicited act, a natural order or transcendental relationship to its proper object.” In my view, Sullivan’s description of the natural appetite of the will applies to natural inclination across the board. Without attempting to recapitulate St. Thomas’s entire metaphysics or his philosophy of

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131 In XII Meta., lect. 12, n. 2634 [Marietti 741]: “Sicuti enim qui est in domo per praeceptum patrisfamilias ad aliquid inclinatur, ita aliqua res naturalis per naturam propriae. Et ipsa natura uniuscuiusque est quaedam inclinatio indita ei a primo movente, ordinans ipsam in debitum finem. Et ex hoc patet, quod res naturales agunt propter finem, licet finem non cognoscant, quia a primo intelligente assequuntur inclinationem in finem.”

132 ST I, q. 5, a. 5 [Leon. 4.63]: “Ad formam autem consequitur inclination ad finem, aut ad aliquid huicmodi, quia unumquodque, inquantum est actu, agit, et tendit in id quod sibi convenit secundum suam formam. Et hoc pertinet ad pondus et ordinem.”


135 Ibid., 495.
nature, I shall focus on a series of distinctions to show that natural inclination is nature considered as a certain disposition or order of a thing.

3. Inclinatio naturalis is Prior to Motion

Inclination and motion are easily confused. In common speech, the English word “inclination” can mean any of the following: a tendency to initiate a motion (or action generally), or the motion itself, or the terminus of such motion.\(^\text{136}\) In St. Thomas’s lexicon, although the term *inclinatio* is occasionally equated with a motion or used in a geometric sense, it almost always means disposition. This is especially true in the case of *inclinatio naturalis*, which only rarely means motion or act.

Inclination, properly speaking, is not (quite) motion. Granted, in a few texts, St. Thomas seems to equate inclination with motion (*motus*). The movements of the higher appetites are called inclinations. He says, for example, “the movement of the appetitive power is an inclination to an appetible good.”\(^\text{137}\) But in the case of *natural* appetite, although motion and inclination are closely linked, natural inclination is that by which something moves, not the motion itself.\(^\text{138}\) Inclination is prior to motion and, in a way, between form and act.

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\(^\text{136}\) Thus an inclination can be a disposition (“a strong passion for the chase”) or a motion (e.g., of bowing, “a most humble inclination of the body”). Scott, *Quentin Durward*, 126, 122. Charles Dickens writes of a certain Mr. Vholes, who “made a short one-sided inclination of his head from the neck, and slowly shook it.” Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1993), 525. When Vholes “makes” an inclination of his head, is the inclination the act of inclining or the resulting angle—the “incline,” in geometrical terms—of the head?

\(^\text{137}\) *ST* II-II, q. 175, a. 2 [Leon. 10.403]: “motus appetitivae virtutis est quaedam inclinatio in bonum appetibile.” Elsewhere, he seems to equate “this movement” and “this inclination.” *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 3, a. 1, qc. 1 [Parma 7/2.1191]: “per inclinationem naturalem, sicut lapis movetur deorsum; et hic motus non praexigit cognitionem in eo quod movetur, sed in alio quod est principium causans hanc inclinationem; et hic est motus naturalis.” *In II Sent.*, d. 24, q. 3, a. 1: “motus . . . est via in ens; unde in partibus animae motus proprie dicitur inclinatio ad aliquid; et ideo quibus viribus inclinatio non convenit, eis proprie motus non attribuitur.”

\(^\text{138}\) *In II Sent.*, d. 24, q. 3, a. 1: “Inclinatio autem est in appetitu, qui movet in aliquid agendum: et ideo actus appetitivum virtutum, motus vocantur; non autem proprie actus apprehensivum. . . . Naturalis quidem appetitus, puta cibi, est quem non imaginatio gignit, sed ipsa qualitatum naturalium dispositio, quibus naturales vires suas actiones exercet.”
and motion. The principle and immobile foundation of motion is nature, understood as form. But in several texts, St. Thomas calls the natural inclination itself the principle of motion. In the case of a heavy thing, for example, the natural inclination, which is “from heaviness” (ex gravitate), is the principle of motion. Similarly, “natural motion procedes from natural inclination.” In any event, natural inclination precedes natural motion: “in natural movements there is first an inclination of a nature’s appetite to its end.” Indeed, in describing natural motion towards an end, St. Thomas expressly delineates between a thing’s nature, its natural inclination, and its natural motion:

Since different natures have different ends, there are three prerequisites for obtaining any end among natural things: a nature proportioned to that end, an inclination which is a natural appetite for that end, and a movement toward the end. Thus it is clear that in the element earth there is a certain nature by which being in the center is characteristic of it, and consequent upon this nature there is an inclination to the center according to which earth naturally tends to such a place even when it is violently kept away from it; and so when the obstacle is removed it always moves downward. St. Thomas applies the same threefold schema to man:

Now in his nature man is proportioned to a certain end for which he has a natural appetite and for the obtaining of which he can work by his natural powers. That end is a contemplation of divine things such as is possible to man according to the capabilities of his

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139 De spe, q. 4, a. 3 [Marietti 808]: “In motibus autem naturalibus invenimus, primo quidem, principium ipsius motus, quod est informatio mobilis per suam formam non animalem, sicut cum generatur grave aut leve. Secundo est motus naturalis, proveniens ex tali forma; sicut cum corpus ascendit et descendit.” Cf. ST I, q. 82, a. 1 [Leon. 5.293]: “Oportet enim quod illud quod naturaliter alici convenit et immobiler, sit fundamentum et principium omnium aliorum, quia natura rei est primum in unoquoque, et omnis motus procedit ab aliquo immobili.”

140 ST I-II, q. 36, a. 2 [Leon. 6.250]: “Sicut descensionis corporis gravis causa sicut finis, est locus deorsum, principium autem motus est inclinatio naturalis, quae est ex gravitate.”

141 De spe, q. 4, a. 3 [Marietti 808]: “motus naturalis ex inclinatione naturali procedit.”

142 In Gal., cap. 5, lect. 6, n. 330 [Marietti 1.636]: “inter motus naturales primus est inclinatio appetitus naturae ad finem suum.”

143 De ver., q. 27, a. 2 [Leon. 22/3.794:110-21]: “Cum enim diversarum naturarum diversi sint fines, ad consecutionem alciuis finis in rebus naturalibus tria praexiguntur: scilicet natura proportionata ad finem illum; et inclinatio ad finem illum, quae est naturalis appetitus finis; et motus in finem. Sicut patet quod in terra est natura quaedam, per quam sibi competit esse in medio; et hanc naturam sequitur inclinationi in locum medium, secundum quam appetit naturaliter talem locum, cum extra ipsum per violentiam detinetur; et ideo, nullo prohibente, semper deorsum movetur.” I agree with Robert Sullivan, who cites the foregoing text as evidence that motion and inclination are distinct for Thomas. Sullivan, “Natural Necessitation of the Human Will,” 502. See ibid., 498 for the point that appetite is not motion.
Similarly, he distinguishes between, first, the inclination whereby a mobile thing is “proportioned” (proportionatur) to its end, second, the motion of the thing, third, the form or place towards which there is motion, and, fourth the repose in the form educed or place reached.\textsuperscript{145} Thus, nature inclines toward motion and, in turn, towards the proportionate end.\textsuperscript{146}

In his commentary on Aristotle’s \textit{Physics}, St. Thomas accepts Aristotle’s definition of motion as “the act of something existing in potency insofar as it is in potency.”\textsuperscript{147} He does not discuss \textit{inclinatio} in the context of this definition, but if inclination is understood as prior to motion, then it must be somehow related to potency. If potency is understood as a limitation on the act of existence, then potency is nothing other than nature itself—albeit

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\item\textsuperscript{144} \emph{De ver.}, q. 27, a. 2 [Leon. 22/3.794:121-46]: “Homo autem secundum naturam suam proportionatus est ad quendam finem, cuius habet naturalem appetitum; et secundum naturales vires operari potest ad consecutionem illius finis: qui finis est aliqua contemplatio divinorum, qualis est homini possibilis secundum facultatem naturae . . . . Et ideo, sicut in rebus naturalibus est alius natura ipsa quam inclinatio naturae, et eius motus vel operatio.”
\item\textsuperscript{145} \textit{Comp. theol.} I, cap. 107 [Leon. 42.121-22:1-11]: “cum procedere de potentia in actum vel sit motus, vel sit simile motui, circa processum huius beatitudinis consequendum similiter se habet sicut in motu vel in mutatione naturali. In motu enim naturali primo quidem consideratur aliqua proprietas per quam proportionatur vel inclinant mobile ad talem finem, sicut gravitas in terra ad hoc quod feratur deorsum: non enim moveretur aliquid naturaliter ad certum finem, nisi haberet proportionem ad illum.”
\item\textsuperscript{146} \textit{ST} I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273-74]: “aliquis motus dicitur naturalis, quia ad ipsum inclinat natura. Sed hoc contingit dupliciter. Uno modo, quod totum perficitur a natura, absque aliqua operatione apprehensivae virtutis, sicut moveri sursum est motus naturalis ignis, et augeri est motus naturalis animalium et plantarum. Alio modo dicitur motus naturalis, ad quem natura inclinat, licet non perficiatur nisi per apprehensionem, quia, sicut supra dictum est, motus cognitivae et appetitivae virtutis reducuntur in naturam, sicut in principium primum. Et per hunc modum, etiam ipsi actus apprehensivae virtutis, ut intelligere, sentire et memorari, et etiam motus appetitus animalis, quandoque dicuntur naturales.”
\item\textsuperscript{147} \textit{In III Phys.}, lect. 2, n. 3 [Leon. 2.105]: “actus existentis in potentia secundum quod huiusmodi.” Cf. \textit{In III Phys.}, lect. 4, n. 1 [Leon. 2.109]: “Et potest dici quod hic ponit aliam definitionem motus, quae se habet ad praemissam ut materialis ad formalem, et conclusio ad principium. Et haec est definitio: motus est actus mobilis inquantum est mobile. Haec enim definitio conclusitur ex praemissa. Quia enim motus est actus existentis in potentia inquantum huiusmodi; existens autem in potentia inquantum huiusmodi, est mobile, non autem movens, quia movens inquantum huiusmodi est ens in actu; sequitur quod motus sit actus mobilis inquantum huiusmodi.”
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
nature taken to mean essence. But the term “potency” (or “essence” or “nature”) as such does not convey the note of tendency or striving that *inclinatio* carries. *Inclinatio* seems to be something “north” of potency, but where exactly is it found? A focus on form seems more promising.

### 4. Natural Inclination Follows Upon Form

For St. Thomas, it is axiomatic that “some inclination follows upon every form.”

Everything, insofar as it is in act, has an inclination to some end or action fitting (*conveniens*) to its form. Every inclination is to something good. The form upon which inclination follows can be either natural form or some other supervenient form. Every form “inclines its

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148 The limiting principle of existence “could only be a certain potentiality for existing, called the *essence* or *nature of the being.*” Charles A. Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics*, 7 (emphasis in original). Natural appetite is the “universal urge of being for the supplement of being by which [all beings] are completed.” Ibid., 305. Cf. *ST* I-II, q. 27, a. 3 [Leon. 6.194]: “similitudo inter aliqua potest attendi dupliciter. Uno modo, ex hoc quod utrumque habet idem in actu, sicut duo habentes albedinem, dicuntur similes. Alio modo, ex hoc quod unum habet in potentia et in quadam inclinatione, illud quod aliud habet in actu, sicut si dicamus quod corpus grave existens extra suum locum, habet similitudinem cum corpore gravi in suo loco existenti.”

149 The notion of potency as that of matter to form seems to be less relevant to this inquiry. Thomas does speak of a natural inclination of matter to form in a number of texts (see Appendix, “Index of Natural Inclinations”), but this is not the natural inclination (of form) that concerns us.


151 *ST* I, q. 5, a. 5 [Leon. 4.63]: “Ad formam . . . consequitur inclinatio ad finem, aut ad aliquid huiusmodi, quia unumquodque, inquantum est actu, agit, et tendit in id quod sibi convenit secundum suam formam.”

152 *ST* I-II, q. 8 a. 1 [Leon. 6.68]: “Omnis . . . appetitus non est nisi boni. Cuius ratio est quia appetitus nihil aliud est quam inclinatio appetentis in aliquid. Nihil autem inclinatur nisi in aliquid simile et conveniens. Cum igitur omnis res, inquantum est ens et substantia, sit quoddam bonum, necesse est ut omnis inclinatio sit in bonum.”
subject according to the mode of its nature."  

Natural form, which is distinct from cognitional form (i.e., the form apprehended by sense or intellect), “inclines to its end.”

The proper operation a thing follows upon form according to the mode of the thing. A natural thing has an inclination to its proper operations and proper end through the form “by which it is perfected in species.” In a few texts, St. Thomas says the natural inclination follows upon the “ratio of the thing’s essential nature.”

A heavy thing, for example, desires to be downward on account of its essential nature. Form itself is not the natural inclination. Rather, natural inclination “arises” (oritur) from form; form is the “principle of inclination.”

The inclination of inanimate things, which follows upon natural form, is “to one thing” and cannot be removed.

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153 ST I, q. 62, a. 3, ad 2 [Leon. 5.113]: “omnis forma inclinat suum subiectum secundum modum naturae eius.” ST I, q. 87, a. 4 [Leon. 5.363]: “actus voluntatis nihil aliud est quam inclinatio quaedam consequens formam intellectam, sicut appetitus naturalis est inclinatio consequens formam naturalem. Inclinatio autem cuiuslibet rei est in ipsa re per modum eius. Unde inclinatio naturalis est naturaliter in re naturali; et inclinatio quae est appetitus sensibilis, est sensibiliter in sentiente; et similiter inclinatio intelligibilis, quae est actus voluntatis, est intelligibiliter in intelligente.” See John Tomarchio, The Modus Principle in the Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, 127.

154 In II Sent., d. 41, q. 1, a. 1: “forma naturalis inclinat in suum finem.” See also ST I-II, q. 8, a. 1 [Leon. 6.68]; ST I, q. 81, a. 2 [Leon. 5.289]; In II De anima, lect. 5, n. 8 [Leon. 45/1.88:104-117]; ST I, q. 80 a. 1 [Leon. 5.282]. See Chapter VI, infra., for discussion of inclination as following upon form at each level of appetite.

155 SCG IV, cap. 19, n. 2 [Leon. 15.74]: “Res . . . naturalis per formam qua perficitur in sua specie, habet inclinationem in propriis operationibus et proprium finem, quem per operationes consequitur.” Cf. ST I-II, q. 71, a. 4 [Leon. 7.6]: “Forma . . . naturalis ex necessitate producit operationem sibi convenientem, unde non potest esse simul cum forma naturali actus formae contrariae; sicut non potest esse cum calore actus infringidationis.”

156 Expositio De ebdomadibus, lect. 2: “Si enim similitudo per se est appetenda, consequenter id quod appetit alius, ostenditur tale naturaliter esse quale est hoc quod appetit, quia scilicet naturalem inclinationem habet ad id quod appetit. Quae quidem naturalis inclinationio . . . sequitur ipsum essentiam rei, sicut grave appetit esse deorsum secundum rationem suae essentiae naturae.”

157 SCG IV, cap. 19, n. 3 [Leon. 15.74]: “[Ex forma] oritur inclinationis naturalis, quod res naturalis habet affinitatem et convenientiam secundum formam, quam diximus esse inclinationis principium.”

158 The stone cannot be “accustomed” to moving upward. See De virt. comm., a. 9 [Marietti 731-32]: “inclinatio rerum naturalium consequitur formam; et ideo est ad unum, secundum exigentiam formae: qua remanente, talis inclinationi toli non potest, nec contraria induci. Et propter hoc, res naturales neque assuescunt aliquid neque dissuescunt; quantumcumque enim lapis sursum feratur nunquam hoc assuescet, sed semper inclinatur ad motum deorsum.”
At each level of being, movement and action proper to the thing follow upon form, whether natural or apprehended:

[Just as a thing has a natural inclination toward something, and has movement and action in order to pursue that toward which it is inclined through its natural form, so also does the inclination toward a thing apprehended by sense or by intellect, follow upon the apprehension of a sensible or intelligible form.]

But everything, including each animate thing, has its own natural inclination following upon its natural form prior to any act of apprehension by its cognitive powers. Man has his own natural inclination to his proper operation—“to understand” and to act in accord with reason. Man’s substantial form is the principle of his natural inclination to seek knowledge and to act according to virtue:

[All men naturally desire to know. This happens because all things have in themselves . . . an inclination of nature, which is derived from . . . their form itself which is the basis of the inclination.]

[The natural law belongs everything to which a man is inclined according to his nature. Now each thing is inclined naturally to an operation that is suitable to it according to its form: thus fire is inclined to give heat. Wherefore, since the rational soul is the proper form of man, there is in every man a natural inclination to act according to reason: and this is to act according to virtue. Consequently, considered thus, all acts of virtue are prescribed by the natural law: since each one’s reason naturally dictates to him to act virtuously.]

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159 Q. d. de anima, a. 13 [Leon. 24/1.117:232-37]: “Sicut . . . per formam naturalem res habet inclinationem ad aliquid, et habet motum aut actionem ad consequendum id ad quod inclinatur; ita ad formam etiam sensibilem vel intelligibilem sequitur inclinationem rem sive per sensum sive per intellectum comprehensam.”

160 In I Meta., lect. 1, n. 3 [Marietti 6]: “Secundo, quia quaelibet res naturalem inclinationem habet ad suam proprium operationem: sicut calidum ad calefaciendum, et grave ut deorsum moveatur. Propria autem operatio hominis inquantum homo, est intelligere. Per hoc enim ab omnibus aliiis differt.”

161 In VII Ethic., lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:163-8]: “Omnes homines natura scire desiderant. Et hoc contingit, quia omnia habent naturaliter in se ipsis . . . inclinationem naturae, quae dependet ex principio primo; vel etiam ipsam formam, quae est huius inclinationis principium.”

162 ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.171]: “ad legem naturae pertinet omne illud ad quod homo inclinatur secundum suam naturam. Inclinator autem unumquodque naturaliter ad operationem sibi convenientem secundum suam formam, sicut ignis ad calefaciendum. Unde cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis, naturalis inclination inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem. Et hoc est agere secundum virtutem.”
5. Form as “Something Divine”

Although form is the proximate source of natural inclination, natural inclination, and form itself, are from God, as St. Thomas repeatedly states. He says, strikingly, that all things have in themselves “something divine, namely an inclination of nature, which is derived from the first principle, or even form itself which is the principle of its inclination.”163 By “something divine” (quiddam divinum), he does not mean form is itself God.164 Rather, he mean that the natural inclination is from God—“dependent upon the first principle.”165 Natural inclination is proximately from form and, through form, from God:

But the natural inclination is both from the natural form and from that which gave the form; hence it is said that the motion of fire upward is from its lightness and from the generator that produced such form.166

Here again we see the dual, intrinsic-extrinsic meaning of inclination (which brings to mind St. Thomas’s description of Gratian’s definition of natural law in terms of an extrinsic, higher moving principle, namely God).167 Form is between God and inclination, as it were, because (1) God instills (indidit) form in the thing, and (2) form is that through which the thing is “inclined to the end appointed to it by Him.”168 God is the one who gives the thing its form, upon which inclination follows. He is, in that way, the “first generator” of each natural

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163 *In VII Ethic.*, lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:165-8]: “quiddam divinum, scilicet inclinationem naturae, quae dependet ex principio primo; vel etiam ipsam formam, quae est huius inclinationis principium.”


165 *In VII Ethic.*, lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:165-8]: “dependet ex principio primo.”

166 *De malo*, q. 3, a. 3 [Leon. 23.73:224-28]: “Inclinatio autem naturae est et a forma naturali et ab eo quod dedit formam; unde dicitur quod motus ignis sursum est ab eius levitate, et a generante quod talem formam creavit.”

167 *In IV Sent.*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.968]: “ea quae sunt de jure divino, dicuntur esse de jure naturali, cum sint ex impressione et infusione superioris principii, scilicet Dei; et sic accipitur ab Isidoro, qui dicit, quod jus naturale est quod in lege et in Evangelio continetur.”

168 *ST II-II*, q. 23, a. 2 [Leon. 8.165]: “Deus, qui omnia movet ad debitos fines, singulis rebus indidit formas per quas inclinantur ad fines sibi praestitutos a Deo.”
thing. The form of heavy and light things, by which they are inclined to their natural motions, is the “impression of the generator” and thus the *per se* mover of natural things. The inclination of nature “flows” (*procedit*) from divine wisdom. Therefore, “all created things, according to the impression received from the Creator, are inclined towards seeking the good according to their mode.”

If natural inclination, though it flows from form, is not itself form, what then is it?

6. Disposition and Inclination, Disposing and Inclining

In view of the misleading sense of the English term “inclination” as a “blind urge,” as we saw in Chapter I, a few natural law scholars translate *inclinatio* as “disposition.” Anthony Lisska, for example, warns that translating *inclinatio* as “inclination” leads “directly into the hornet’s nest of subjective desires so commonly criticized in many [utilitarian] theories.” It is better, he argues, to translate it as “disposition”—which “avoids misinterpreting this concept as an intentional act or conscious drive.” He argues that disposition better conveys

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169 *In VIII Phys.*, lect. 8, n. 7 [Leon. 2.393]: “ille qui divellit columnam, non dat gravi superposito impetum vel inclinationem ad hoc quod sit deorsum: hoc enim habuit a primo generante, quod dedit ei formam quam sequitur talis inclination.”

170 *In IV Sent.*, d. 44, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 3, ad 2 [Parma 7/2.1097]: “in motu naturali gravium et levium: quia per ipsam formam eorum inclinantur ad motum talem: est enim forma impressio generantis, quod est motor per se gravium et levium.”

171 *ST* II-II, q. 26, a. 6 [Leon. 8.214-15]: “Non enim minus est ordinatus affectus caritatis, qui est inclinatio gratiae, quam appetitus naturalis, qui est inclinatio naturae, utraque enim inclinatio ex divina sapientia procedit.”

172 *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 1 [Parma 7/2.1191]: “quia omnia procedunt a Deo inquantum bonus est . . . ideo omnia creatae secundum impressionem a creatore receptam inclinantur in bonum appetendum secundum suum modum.”


174 Lisska, *Reconstruction*, 104. Lisska explains, “The metaphysics of finality . . . argues that an end is to be attained, not because of a subjective desire or wish on the part of the agent, but because the end itself determines the well-functioning of the human person. The disposition has, as a part of its very nature, a tendency towards a specific end. This end, when realized, contributes to the well-being of the individual. This is the crux of natural law moral theory.” Ibid., 107.
the end-directedness of *inclinatio*.\(^{175}\) “Disposition” indeed has the advantage of still having both transitive and intransitive senses, whereas the transitive (extrinsic) of “incline” has fallen into disuse.\(^ {176}\) But “disposition” has a range of common meanings which are likely to lead to the same misinterpretations as “inclination.” Disposition can just as well be a subjective quality or acquired habit (*habitus*) as a natural inclination.\(^ {177}\) Another difficulty is that St. Thomas himself generally does not use the term *dispositio naturalis* (or *naturae*) as a synonym for the term *inclinatio naturalis* in the proper sense of inclination of form. Instead, by *dispositio naturalis*, he typically means the material disposition of the body, which is to say the *complexio* of the individual. This disposition is “natural,” then, only with respect to nature considered as a material principle (i.e., *natura individualis*, as discussed in Chapter III).\(^ {178}\)

My immediate concern, though, is not with lexical matters, but with whether an *inclinatio* is a *dispositio* in the broader philosophical sense. In a discussion of voluntary inclination, St. Thomas offers what appears to be a general definition of *inclinatio* as a type of *dispositio*: “[A]n inclination is a disposition of the mover in virtue of which the agent produces movement.”\(^ {179}\) In this case, consistent with the discussion of motion above, the will’s inclination is prior to actual movement. But does this definition—which appears

\(^{175}\) Lisska, *Reconstruction*, 99: “It is impossible to consider the structure of a disposition without bringing the concept of teleology into the discussion. A disposition, of its very nature, is tending towards a ‘telos’ or end.”

\(^{176}\) See *OED*, s.v. “disposition,” def. 1: “The action or faculty of disposing, the condition of being disposed.”

\(^{177}\) Ibid., def. 7a: “The state or quality of being disposed, inclined, or ‘in the mind’ (to something, or to do something); inclination (sometimes = desire, intention, purpose); state of mind or feeling in respect to a thing or person; the condition of being (favourably or unfavourably) disposed towards.” Bonnie Kent reasonably translates the scholastic term *habitus* as “disposition.” See, e.g., Kent, “Aristotle’s Ethics, Situationist Psychology, and a Fourteenth Century Debate,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 25 (2008): 99.

\(^{178}\) See discussion of *dispositio* in Chapter VII and *natura individualis* in Chapter III.

nowhere else in the corpus—apply to natural inclination as well? I shall argue that it does apply thus, in both an intrinsic sense and an extrinsic sense.

a. Intrinsic disposition: inclinatio as that by which a nature is disposed to move

St. Thomas accepts Aristotle’s definition of dispositio (διάθεσις) as “nothing else than the order of parts in a things which has parts.” There are three kinds of such order, only the second of which concerns us—i.e., disposition “in the first species of quality,” which is “the order of parts . . . considered in reference to potency or active power.” In this sense, for example, a thing is said to be disposed “according to health or sickness, by reason of the fact that its parts have an order in its active or passive power.”

This disposition as quality can be of either matter or form; form is the relevant subset for natural inclination purposes. A disposition in the sense parallel to natural inclination is a quality, an order, of form, which is neither the thing itself, nor form or matter itself, nor the motion of the thing. It is, rather, that through which the thing moves towards an end. The disposition of heat, for example, is to the form of fire, but heat is not itself fire. Disposition

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180 In V Meta., lect. 20, n. 1058 [Marietti 330]: “dispositio nihil est aliud, quam ordo partium in habent partes” (Aristotle, Meta. IV. 19, 1022. b. 1: “διάθεσις λέγεται τοῦ ἐχόντος μέρη τάξις”). The term διάθεσις is from the verb διατίθημι, “to arrange.” Cf. ST 1-II, q. 49, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 6.310].

181 In V Meta., lect. 20, n. 1059 [Marietti 330]: “ordo partium attenditur secundum potentiam sive virtutem; et sic dispositio ponitur in prima specie qualitatis. Dicitur enim aliquid hoc modo esse dispositum, utputa secundum sanitatem vel aegritudinem, ex eo quod partes eius habent ordinem in virtute activa vel passiva.” St. Thomas summarizes the three modes of dispositio in De virt. comm., a. 1, ad 9 [Marietti 710]: “Uno modo, per quam materia disponitur ad formae receptionem, sicut calor est dispositio ad formam ignis. Alio modo, per quam aliquod agens disponitur ad agendum, sicut velocitas est dispositio ad cursum. Tertio modo dispositio dicitur ipsa ordinatio aliquorum ad invicem.”

182 In V Meta., lect. 20, n. 1059 [Marietti 330]: “secundum sanitatem vel aegritudinem, ex eo quod partes eius habent ordinem in virtute activa vel passiva.” Cf. ST 1-I, q. 49, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 6.310] (quoting Simplicius’s commentary): “Quod autem dicit secundum potentiam, includit illas dispositiones quae sunt in praeparatione et idoneitate nondum perfecte, sicut scientia et virtus inchoata.”

183 ST 1-II, q. 74, a. 4, ad 3 [Leon. 7.38]: “dispositio tripliciter se habet ad id ad quod disponit. Quandoque enim est idem et in eodem, sicut scientia inchoata dicitur esse dispositio ad scientiam perfectam. Quandoque autem est in eodem, sed non idem, sicut calor est dispositio ad formam ignis.”
is towards something determinate: “a disposition for something means that through which something is moved to achieve something.”¹⁸⁴

If an inclination is a disposition in the species of quality, what sort of disposition-quality, then, is a natural inclination? At the risk of giving a circular answer, a natural inclination is a disposition a thing has in virtue of its nature. It is distinct from other supervenient dispositions, such as habit or a voluntary disposition. While, as noted, natural disposition usually means the disposition of an individual, natural inclination in the sense proper to natural law means a disposition a man has in virtue of his form as human. St. Thomas explains that man’s natural disposition, which inclines him to acts of particular virtues, can be either on the part of reason and will (which are common to all men) or on the part of the sensitive appetite (the natural complexion of which varies from individual to individual).¹⁸⁵ St. Thomas does not frequently use dispositio-terms in discussions of natural law and does not use the term dispositio naturalis (or equivalents) as synonymous with inclinatio naturalis in the treatise on law or any natural law or other law-related text.

b. Extrinsic disposition: disponere and inclinare

As Anthony Lisska observes, a disposition—in the sense relevant to natural inclination—“is not, of itself, a conscious drive or the object of consciousness.”¹⁸⁶ Lisska is only half right—a natural inclination need not be known by the creature, but it is nevertheless the disposition of an intelligent mover. Keeping in mind the general notion that an inclination is an intrinsic disposition towards motion, we can get a more precise sense of how a natural disposition works.

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¹⁸⁴ *De virt. comm.*, a. 1, ad 8 [Marietti 710]: “dispositio ad aliquid dicitur id per quod aliquid movetur in illud consequendum.”

¹⁸⁵ *In VI Ethic.*, lect. 11, n. 2-3 [Leon. 47/2.375:35-43]. See Chapter IV on the natural inclinations to virtue.

¹⁸⁶ Anthony Lisska, *Reconstruction*, 104.
inclination is both an intrinsic leaning and an extrinsic (transitive) inclining of the thing by God through form towards an end-directed motion. As *inclinare* has a dual reflexive-transitive sense, so does the term *disponere*. God “disposes” a thing (sets it in order towards an end) and the thing is disposed towards an end.

God moves each thing by a disposition impressed upon the nature of the thing: “the second movers must be ordained to the end of the first mover by a disposition impressed [dispositio impressa] upon them by the first mover.” In this way, natural inclination is that through which God “disposeth all things”:

God, Who moves all things to their due ends, bestowed on each thing the form whereby it is inclined to the end appointed to it by Him; and in this way He ‘disposeth all things sweetly’ (Wisdom 8:1).

G. Divine Intentionality of Natural Inclination

Commenting on the *Physics*, St. Thomas agrees with Aristotle that “one who says that nature does not act for the sake of something, destroys nature and the things which are according to nature.” This is because nature is intrinsically teleological:

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187 Several texts in the treatise on law illustrate the extrinsic aspect of dispositio. The law-giver, through the law, disposes his subjects through certain “dispositions” (specifications) of the natural law. See *ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 3 [Leon. 7.155]: “ex praeceptis legis naturalis, quasi ex quibusdam principiis communibus et indemonstrabilibus, necesse est quod ratio humana procedat ad aliqua magis particulariter disponenda. Et istae particulares dispositiones adinventae secundum rationem humanam, dicuntur leges humanae.” See also *ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 4 [Leon. 7.155-6]; *ST* I-II, q. 95, a. 1 [Leon. 7.174-75]. Cf. Du Cange, *Glossarium*, s.v. “dispositio,” lemm. 2: “Administratio, magistratus.” Analogously, divine wisdom, contained in the precepts of the divine law, disposes all things to their due mode and order. *ST* I-II q. 100, a. 7 [Leon. 6.213]: “in praeceptis divinae legis maxima sapientia continentur, unde dicitur Deut. IV, haec est vestra sapientia et intellectus coram populis. Sapientis autem est omnia debito modo et ordine disponere.” The Old Law worked “as a kind of disposition, since by withdrawing men from idolatrous worship, it enclosed them in the worship of God.” *ST* I-II, q. 98, a. 2 [Leon. 7.194]: “per modum cuiusdam dispositionis, dum, retrahens homines a cultu idololatriae, concludebat eos sub cultu unius Dei.” Cf. *ST* I-II, q. 98, a. 3; *ST* I-II, q. 99, a. 6; *ST* I-II, q. 100, a. 12; *ST* I-II, q. 104, a. 3 c. and ad 3.

188 *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 1 [Parma 7/2.1191]: “quod in omni ordine mobilium et motorum oportet secundos motores ordinari in finem primi motoris per dispositionem impressam in eis a primo motore.”

189 *ST* II-II, q. 23 a. 2 [Leon. 8.165]: “Deus, qui omnia movet ad debitos fines, singulis rebus indidit formas per quas inclinantur ad fines sibi praestitutos a Deo, et secundum hoc disponit omnia suavitern, ut dicitur Sap. VIII.” Cf. *ST* I, q. 22, a. 1 [Leon. 4.263] (Providence as disposition).
For those things are said to be according to nature which are moved continuously by some intrinsic principle until they arrive at some end—not to some contingent end, and not from any principle to any end, but from a determinate principle to a determinate end.\textsuperscript{191}

As we have seen in the discussion of divine art above, nature acts “as if” the ship’s timbers “were” to assemble themselves.\textsuperscript{192} But the determinacy of the end is not merely a mirage, an “epiphenomen” masking the reality of end-less matter in motion. Nor is this determinacy, to the extent is it is acknowledged as real, merely a brute fact, a teleonomous happenstance, or still less the chance product of, say, the proverbial infinite number of monkeys producing Shakespeare by tapping on an infinite number of typewriters forever. Confident of the reality of this determinacy, St. Thomas does not hesitate to make two important moves in the same regard as he comments on the same text. First, he speaks in terms of \textit{intention}:

\begin{quote}
\textit{[I]t is clear that the determinate end which follows in nature does not follow by chance, but from \textit{the intention of nature} [\textit{ex intentione naturae}]. And from this it is clear that it is contrary to the meaning \textit{[ratio]} of nature to say that nature does not act for the sake of something.}\textsuperscript{193}
\end{quote}

Second, he carries Aristotle’s art-nature analogy to what he (St. Thomas) regards as its clear (\textit{patens}) logical conclusion: “It is clear that nature is nothing but a certain kind of art, i.e., the divine art impressed upon things, by which these things are moved to a determinate end.”\textsuperscript{194}

Is the intention of nature somehow the intention of the divine Artisan? If so, how is this natural-divine intentionality related to natural inclination?

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{190} \textit{In II Phys.}, lect. 14, n. 7 [Leon. 2.95]: “ille qui sic dicit, naturam scilicet non agere propter aliquid, destruit naturam et ea quae sunt secundum naturam.”
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid.: “Haec enim dicuntur esse secundum naturam, quaecumque ab aliquo principio intrinseco moventur continue, quousque perveniant ad aliquem finem; non in quodcumque contingens, neque a quocumque principio in quemcumque finem, sed a determinato principio in determinatum finem.”
\textsuperscript{192} \textit{In II Phys.}, lect. 14, n. 8 [Leon. 2.95]: “Si enim . . . esset.”
\textsuperscript{193} \textit{In II Phys.}, lect. 14, n. 7 [Leon. 2.95]: “In rebus autem naturalibus, non per accidens sed semper sic est, nisi aliquid impediat: unde manifestum est quod determinatus finis, qui sequitur in natura, non sequitur a casu, sed ex intentione naturae. Ex quo patet quod contra rationem naturae est, dicere quod natura non agat propter aliquid.”
\textsuperscript{194} \textit{In II Phys.}, lect. 14, n. 8 [Leon. 2.95]: “patet quod natura nihil est aliud quam ratio cuiusdam artis, scilicet divinae, indita rebus, qua ipsae res moventur ad finem determinatum.”
\end{footnotesize}
1. Divine Cognition of Natural Ends

As discussed above, for St. Thomas, any determinate action for an end presupposes an intelligent first mover. *Opus naturae opus intelligentiae*. In extrinsic terms, there is “above” all natures an intellect, which instills natural inclination in them. But this intellect, namely God, not only gives the thing the natural inclination toward the determinate end, but also *pre-determines* that end. This pre-determination of the end, in turn, entails the pre-existence of the end in the superior, extrinsic intellect. Natural teleology is thus rooted in divine knowledge of things. In irrational creatures, the end pre-exists only in this intellect. In the order of divine governance, this instilling of natural inclination stands to providence as natural motion stands to divine governance and natural end to divine knowledge. There can be no “blind” natural “urge”; still less can there be a natural determination of the given end through chance. “Teleonomy”—Darwinism’s best effort to save the appearances of end-directed behavior in nature—would be no better than the destruction of nature.

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195 *De ver.*, q. 2, a. 3 [Leon. 22/1.50-51:217-23]: “In rebus autem naturalibus invenimus naturalem appetitum, quo unaquaeque res in finem suum tendit; unde oportet supra omnes res naturales ponere aliquem intellectum, qui res naturales ad suos fines ordinaverit, et eis naturalem inclinationem sive appetitum indiderit.”

196 *In II Sent.*, d. 41, q. 1, a. 1, ad 6: “inclinatio naturalis in finem praesupponit quemdam intellectum praestituentem finem naturae, et dantem sibi inclinationem in finem ultimum.”

197 As Leo Elders, *The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 104, writes: “all tending towards something and all forms of love presuppose some knowledge of [the end]. With regard to the natural inclinations of beings the Creator, who placed these inclinations in them, knows the objects to which they are directed.”

198 *De ver.*, q. 5, a. 2 [Leon. 22/1.144:163-77]: “id quod intellectu caret vel cognitione, non potest directe in finem tendere, nisi per aliquam cognitionem ei praestituatur finis, et dirigatur in ipsum; unde oportet, cum res naturales cognitione careant, quod praeexistat aliquis intellectus, qui res naturales in finem ordinet, ad modum quo sagittator dat sagittae certum motum, ut tendat ad determinatum finem; unde, sicut percussio quae fit per sagittam non tantum dicitur opus sagittae, sed proiicientis, ita etiam omne opus naturae dicitur a philosophis opus intelligentiae. Et sic oportet quod per providentiam illius intellectus qui ordinem praedictum naturae indidit, mundus gubernetur.” See also *De ver.*, q. 3, a. 1 [Leon. 22/1.99-100:183-261].

199 Robert Pasnau, who himself seems to prefer a “more attractive” version of Thomas’s teleology than the “full-blown cosmic teleology one expects of Aquinas,” admits that so-called evolutionary teleology is not enough: “Genuine final causality involves a mind’s reaching forward toward some goal and, by conceiving of that goal, giving it causal efficacy. . . . Appetite is the crucial intermediary in the causal sequence that begins with the mind’s conception of an end and finishes with the completed action that achieves the end. The purpose of appetite is to achieve a certain end; the source of appetite is a conception of that end.” Pasnau, *Thomas
St. Thomas uses the terms *cognitio* and *apprehensio* to describe the divine intellecction of the end. Although these terms usually suggest “psychological” acts, that is, the acts of cognitive powers, God has no soul. The cognition, or apprehension, of the end—which is presupposed by natural inclination—is, nevertheless, God’s:

> Every inclination on the part of nature requires some cognition that selects the end, inclines toward the end, and provides the means by which that end is reached. This cannot occur without cognition. And for this reason the philosophers say that the work of nature is a work of intelligence.²⁰⁰

St. Thomas speaks of divine cognition of natural ends in numerous texts. In irrational creatures, the case for divine cognition is clear:

> For things which do not know the end do not tend toward the end unless they are directed by one who does know, as the arrow is directed by the archer. Hence if nature acts for an end, it is necessary that it be ordered by someone who is intelligent.²⁰¹

Norris Clark suggests that natural tendencies are, or presuppose, something “like innate ideas.” While the tendency—*inclinatio*, *appetitus*, etc.—is in an important sense innate, St. Thomas makes clear that the cognition of the end is not within the creature, or to avoid the language of locality, is at least not the creature’s own cognition. In this regard, the following text merits quotation in full:

> Some say that there is natural cognition in all things just as there is a natural appetitive tendency. But this cannot be true because, in view of the fact that cognition is by assimilation,

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²⁰¹ *In II Phys.*, lect. 12, n. 1 [Leon. 2.90]: “Ea enim quae non cognoscunt finem, non tendunt in finem nisi ut directa ab aliquo cognoscente, sicut sagitta a sagittante: unde si natura operetur propter finem, necesse est quod ab aliquo intelligente ordinetur.”
likeness in real existence does not bring about cognition but rather hinders it. It is for this reason that the sense organs must be devoid of sensible species in order to be able to receive them by way of the spiritual existence which causes knowledge. Hence those things which in no way receive anything except according to material existence can in no way know. Yet they can tend [appetere] inasmuch as they are directed to something having real existence.

Appetitive tendency does not necessarily look to a spiritual existence as does cognition. Hence there can be a natural appetite but not a natural cognition. This still does not prevent appetite from following cognition in animals, because even in the things of nature it follows apprehension or cognition—not that of the things which have the appetite but that of Him who directs them to their end.202

To return to the arrow analogy, beings that lack knowledge “tend to good by a natural appetite, not as knowing the good, but because they are moved to it by something cognitive, that is, under the direction of the divine intellect in the way an arrow speeds towards a target by the aim of the archer.”203 In terms of apprehension, “there is an appetite which arises from an apprehension existing, not in the subject of the appetite, but in some other: and this is called the ‘natural appetite.’”204 This “other” in whom the apprehension of the end exists is “the one establishing the nature” (instituentis naturam).

202 De ver., q. 22, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 22/3.614:226-46]: “sicut omnibus appetitus naturalis inest, ita et cognitioni naturalis. Sed hoc non potest esse verum: quia, cum cognitio sit per assimilationem, similitudo in esse naturae, non facit cognitionem, sed magis impedit; ratione cuius oportet organa sensuum a speciebus sensibilium esse demodata, ut possint eas recipere secundum esse spirituale, quod cognitionem causat. Unde illa quae nullo modo possunt aliquid recipere nisi secundum esse materiale, nullo modo possunt cognoscere; tamen possunt appetere, in quantum ordinatur ad aliquam rem in esse naturae existentem. Appetitus enim non respicit de necessitate esse spirituale, sicut cognitionio. Unde potest esse appetitus naturalis, sed non cognition. Nec tamen hoc prohibetur per hoc quod appetitus in animalibus cognitionem sequitur: quia etiam in rebus naturalibus sequitur apprehensionem vel cognitionem: non tamen ipsorum appetentium, sed illius qui ea in finem ordinat.” See also De ver., q. 22, a. 1, ad 9 [Leon. 22/3.615:337-42]: “in omni dirigente in finem requiritur cognitio finis. Natura autem non dirigit in finem, sed dirigitur. Deus autem, et agens a proposito quodlibet etiam dirigunt in finem; et ideo oportet quod habeant finis cognitionem, non autem res naturalis.” Cf. De virt. comm., a. 6 [Marietti 722]: “Oportet autem in appetitus animalis vel rationalis inclinetur in suum appetibile ex aliqua apprehensione praeexistente; inclinatio enim in finem absque praeexistente cognitione ad appetitum pertinet naturalem, sicut grave inclinatur ad medium.” In accord, see Charles Hart, Thomistic Metaphysics, 305: “we must conclude . . . not that there is no influence of an intellect but that there must be some intellect outside such irrational agents to act for them.”

203 In I Ethic., lect. 1, n. 11 [Leon. 47/1.5:167-73]: “de rebus carentibus cognitione, quae naturali appetitu tendunt in bonum, non quasi cognoscant bonum, sed quia ab aliquo cognoscente moventur ad bonum, scilicet ex ordinazione divini intellectus: ad modum quo sagitta tendit ad signum ex directione sagittantis.”

204 ST I-II, q. 26, a. 1 [Leon. 6.188]: “Est . . . quidam appetitus non consequens apprehensionem ipsius appetentis, sed alterius, et huicmodi dicitur appetitus naturalis. Res enim naturales appetunt quod eis convenit secundum suam naturam, non per apprehensionem propriam, sed per apprehensionem instituentis naturam.” In accord, see ST I-II, q. 35, a. 1 [Leon. 6.240]: “Omnis autem motus appetitivus, seu inclinatio consequens
How is this divine cognition or apprehension related to natural inclination? The natural appetite or inclination within the creature itself is neither an innate idea nor something that follows upon an innate idea. Natural inclination does not not follow upon the creature’s own cognition. The natural inclination tends towards its determinate end “without any apprehension of the reason for its appetibility.”205 It can do so because its natural appetite “is nothing but an inclination and ordination of the thing to something else which is in keeping with it, like the ordination of a stone to a place below.”206 There is no need for apprehension of the appellible object at the level of nature, because each natural thing is determined “to one thing” (ad unum) and its natural inclination is to that one thing. But this apprehension “is a prerequisite in the one who established the nature, who gave to each nature its own inclination to a thing in keeping with itself.”207

2. Natural Inclination as Natural Intentionality

For St. Thomas, it is axiomatic that “the agent does not move except ex intentione finis.”208 He extends this concept of agency to nature: “Nature intends,” “intention of universal nature,” and similar formulations appear in numerous texts, formulations which, used in reference to nature, seem curiously psychological.209 St. Thomas discusses natural

\[\text{apprehensionem, pertinet ad appetitum intellectivum vel sensitivum, nam inclinatio appetitus naturalis non consequitur apprehensionem ipsius appetentis, sed alterius, ut in primo dictum est.} \]

\[\text{205 De ver., q. 25, a. 1 [Leon. 22.3.729:131-44]: “Appetitus ergo naturalis tendit in ipsam rem appetibilem sine aliqua apprehensione rationis appetibilitatis.”} \]

\[\text{206 Ibid.: “nihil enim est aliud appetitus naturalis quam quaedam inclinatio rei, et ordo ad aliquam rem sibi convenientem, sicut lapidem ferri ad locum deorum.”} \]

\[\text{207 Ibid.: “haec apprehensio praeexigitur in instituente naturam, qui unicumque naturae dedit inclinationem propriam sibi convenientem.” Cf. ST I-II, q. 27, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 6.193]: “amor naturalis, qui est in omnibus rebus, causatur ex aliqua cognitione, non quidem in ipsis rebus naturalibus existente, sed in eo qui naturam instituit.”} \]

\[\text{208 ST I-II, q. 1, a. 2. See Charles Hart, Thomistic Metaphysics, 309.} \]

\[\text{209 See, e.g., In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.918] (“non enim intendit natura solum generationem ejus, sed traductionem, et promotionem usque ad perfectum statum hominis, inquantum homo est, qui est virtutis status”); SCG III, cap. 94, n. 10 [Leon. 14.289] (“patet quod generatio feminae est praeter...”)} \]
finality in terms that suggest psychology—cognition and apprehension. But these are analogical terms which, as it turns out, refer to divine knowledge. Is the intention of nature somehow the divine intention? Intention, of course, presupposes cognition (by someone) of the end, for the end is first in the order of the agent’s intention, yet last in the order of execution.²¹⁰

In a way, only God can intend nature’s end: “Irrational animals are moved to an end, not as though they thought that they can gain the end by this movement; this belongs to one that intends.”²¹¹ According to William O’Connor, “A natural inclination is a manifestation of intention, which alone accounts for the uniform tendency towards an end; and wherever there is intention, there must be intelligence. . . . [which is] present in the author of these entia naturae who causes them to function in this purposeful way.”²¹² But “intending also has to do with non-cognitive beings, since even the things of nature intend an end, even though intention supposes some knowledge.”²¹³ Thus, in the broad sense of intention as “tending,” intention belongs to both mover and moved:

[T]o intend is to tend to something; and this belongs to the mover and to the moved. According, therefore, as that which is moved to an end by another is said to intend the end, thus nature is said to intend an end, as being moved to its end by God, as the arrow is moved by the archer. And in this way, irrational animals intend an end, inasmuch as they are moved to something by natural instinct. The other way of intending an end belongs to the mover;

²¹⁰ ST I-II, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 6.6]: “finis, etsi sit postremus in executione, est tamen primus in intentione agentis. Et hoc modo habet rationem causae.”
²¹¹ ST I-II, q. 12, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 6.97]: “bruta animalia moventur ad finem, non quasi considerantia quod per motum suum possunt consequi finem, quod est proprie intendentis.”
²¹² William O’Connor, Eternal Quest, 103.
²¹³ De ver., q. 22, a. 13, ad 7 [Leon. 22/3.646:235-38]: “intendere est etiam non cognoscentis, cum etiam res naturales intendant finem, quamvis intentio praesupponat aliquam cognitionem.” In the case of an irrational creature, because its end is entirely determined by the divine agent, both the end and the means to the end are determined such that, De princ. nat., cap. 3 [Leon. 43.42:38-41], “possibile est agens naturale sine deliberatione intendere finem: et hoc intendere nihil aliud erat quam habere naturalem inclinationem ad aliquid.”
according as he ordains the movement of something, either his own or another’s, to an end. This belongs to reason alone. Therefore irrational animals do not intend an end in this way, which is to intend properly and principally.\(^{214}\)

Although *intendere*, in its original, proper sense, signifies “to tend towards something” in a physical way, in its extended sense it signifies an act, “intention,” of will. In any order, the one who “first and principally intends” is the mover of that order, through an act of will.

Now both the action of the mover and the movement of thing moved, tend to something. But that the movement of the thing moved tends to anything, is due to the action of the mover. Consequently intention belongs first and principally to that which moves to the end: hence we say that an architect or anyone who is in authority, by his command moves others to that which he intends.\(^{215}\)

In the case of natural things, the will which “first and principally” intends is that of the one who moves the natural thing—the divine will. In O’Connor’s words, “All natural things . . . are inclined towards their ends by their author and first mover, God. This means that the end of every natural inclination is always something willed and intended by Him.”\(^{216}\)

In at least one text, St. Thomas even uses the noun *inclinatio* to describe the divine will as the cause of all things, which presupposes the pre-existence of all effects in the Divine intellect:

> [E]ffects proceed from the agent that causes them, insofar as they pre-exist in the agent; since every agent produces its like. Now effects pre-exist in their cause after the mode of the cause. Wherefore since the Divine Being is His own intellect, effects pre-exist in Him after the mode of intellect, and therefore proceed from Him after the same mode. Consequently, they proceed

\(^{214}\) ST I-II, q. 12 a. 5 [Leon. 6.97]: “intendere est in aliud tendere; quod quidem est et moventis, et moti. Secundum quidem igitur quod dicitur intendere finem id quod movetur ad finem ab alio, sic natura dicitur intendere finem, quasi mota ad suum finem a Deo, sicut sagitta a sagittante. Et hoc modo etiam bruta animalia intendunt finem, inquantum moventur instinctu naturali ad aliquid. Alio modo intendere finem est moventis, prout scilicet ordinat motum alicuius, vel sui vel alterius, in finem. Quod est rationis tantum. Unde per hunc modum bruta non intendunt finem, quod est proprie et principaliter intendere.”

\(^{215}\) ST I-II, q. 12, a. 1 [Leon. 6.94]: “intentio, sicut ipsum nomen sonat, significat in aliquid tendere. In aliquid autem tendit et actio moventis, et motus mobilis. Sed hoc quod motus mobilis in aliquid tendit, ab actione moventis procedit. Unde intentio primo et principaliter pertinet ad id quod movet ad finem, unde dicimus architectorem, et omnem praecipitentem, movere suo imperio alios ad id quod ipsa intendit.”

from Him after the mode of will, for His inclination to put in act what His intellect has conceived appertains to the will. Therefore the will of God is the cause of things.  

Natural inclination is, therefore, at once the intention of the divine will (extrinsic intention) and the in-tending of the creature itself (intrinsic tending). The order of nature towards its end comes from knowledge in the divine intellect, mediated by the intentionality of natural inclination.  

3. Divine Cognition, Human Cognition, and Natural Inclination

St. Thomas frequently examines the case of irrational creatures to illustrate natural finality and natural inclination and I have focused on the representative texts. But how does any of this talk of the intentionality of “natural things” (i.e., non-cognitive bodies—res naturae, naturalia) apply to human nature? Does not man—who stands apart from all lower creatures—achieve his natural end through his own knowledge, freedom, and intention? Does not man participate in the eternal law “in a more excellent way”—through cognition—not by mere natural inclination? In terms of natural inclination, this is a most difficult question, to which the answer is, in a way, “yes,” and in a way “no.”

a. Human nature and the natural inclination of the will

In Chapters III (Natura) and VI (Appetitus), I addressed in detail the manner in which man has a natural inclination at all levels of his being. To recapitulate a few high points, “All

\[217\] ST I, q. 19, a. 4 [Leon. 4.237]: “effectus procedunt a causa agente, secundum quod praeexistunt in ea, quia omne agens agit sibi simile. Praeexistunt autem effectus in causa secundum modum causae. Unde, cum esse divinum sit ipsum eius intelligere, praeexistunt in eo effectus eius secundum modum intelligibilem. Unde et per modum intelligibilem procedunt ab eo. Et sic, per consequens, per modum voluntatis, nam inclinatio eius ad agendum quod intellectu conceptum est, pertinet ad voluntatem. Voluntas igitur Dei est causa rerum.”

\[218\] See De ver., q. 2, a. 3 [Leon. 22/1.50-51:217-28]: “In rebus autem naturalibus invenimus naturalem appetitum, quo unaquaeque res in finem suum tendit; unde oportet supra omnes res naturales ponere aliquem intellectum, qui res naturales ad suos fines ordinaverit, et eis naturalem inclinationem sive appetitum indiderit. Sed res non potest ordinari ad finem aliquem, nisi res ipsa cognoscatur simul cum fine ad quem ordinanda est; unde oportet quod in intellectu divino a quo rerum naturae origo provenit et naturalis ordo in rebus, sit naturalium rerum cognitio.”

\[219\] ST I-II, q. 91, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 7.153].
things in their own way are inclined by appetite toward the good, but in different ways . . . .”  

220 This includes man. As Charles Hart writes, “even the highest of rational agents manifest tendencies which are not the result of their own self-determination.”  

221 There is a given-ness of nature at all levels of being. Man, though he takes part in his own governance by cognitive participation in the eternal law, is a ruled rule and a measured measure. As Hart explains,

> Obviously, things did not give themselves their inclinations or natures, and being without the power themselves to conceive the ends towards which they move, reason compels us to assume that such preconception is in the mind of some being outside themselves. This Being . . . promulgates what we call the natural law by giving things their tendencies towards ends, their natures. Be it noted that man himself forms no exception to the other orders of nature in the evidence which he also gives of a nisus, “inclination, towards an end” ordained for him. There is a law of his nature which is given to him. The difference in his case, of course, lies in the fact that, being rational, he can be fully conscious of his ultimate end, and, being free, he can reject it.

222 But it is particularly important to grasp that the will is not something above nature that can freely reject nature. The will, inasmuch as it is part of human nature, is man’s nature. As Robert Sullivan explains, the will has its own natural appetite, which itself “does not presuppose cognition on the part of the human intellect (although it does on the part of God) and which precedes actual willing.”  

223 This kind of natural appetite, in the case of the will, “is not really distinct from the will itself, but is the will considered as ordered or transcendentally related to its proper object by its Maker” prior to any human cognition.

224 Significantly, the will’s natural inclination to its ultimate end is, in other words, nature’s

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220 ST I, q. 59, a. 1 [Leon. 5.92].
221 Charles A. Hart, Thomistic Metaphysics, 306. “Potency wherever exhibiting itself is always ordered to act. The good . . . of every being requires this ordering of potency to its completion or end, this aspiration or tendency or inclination of being for being. Since this universal tendency or natural appetite is present in every being following its form, it is analogically predicated of all beings.” Ibid., 352-353.
224 Ibid. See also ibid., 495.
intent for that end. The end is that which is intended by nature and towards which the will naturally inclines.225

b. Objection: Natural inclination or rational nature follows on actual cognition

Without opening a larger debate, which would require a separate study to resolve definitively, I shall consider an objection not fully addressed in Chapter VI. As noted, natural appetite or inclination presupposes cognition. In irrational things, this cognition is clearly not that of the creature itself. But in man, as a rational creature, can we not say that his natural inclination follows upon his own cognition? Indeed, St. Thomas writes,

[Among all others, the rational creature is subject to Divine providence in the most excellent way, insofar as it partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for itself and for others. Wherefore it has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end; and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law. Hence the Psalmist . . . says: “The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us”: thus implying that the light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil, which is the function of the natural law, is nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light. It is therefore evident that the natural law is nothing else than the rational creature’s participation of the eternal law.]226

Notice in this text that, in man’s case, it is on account of his participation in the eternal ratio, that he has his natural inclination. From the “light” (lumen) of natural reason, we know the good and naturally incline accordingly.

Lawrence Dewan regards this natural cognition as a kind of practical knowledge in the human intellect which gives rise to natural appetite:

\[De pot., q. 2, a. 3, ad 6 [Marietti 31]: “ad inclinationem naturae voluntas ad aliquid unum determinetur, quod est ultimus finis a natura intentus.”\]

\[Emphasis added. ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154] (emphasis added): “Inter cetera autem rationalis creatura excellentiior quodam modo divinae providentiae subiacet, inquantum et ipsa fit providentiae particeps, sibi ipsi et alii providens. Unde et in ipsa participatur ratio aeterna, per quam habet naturalem inclinationem ad debitum actum et finem. Et talis participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura lex naturalis dicitur. Unde cum Psalmista dixisset, sacrificare sacrificium iustitiae, quasi quibusdam quaerentibus quae sunt iustitiae opera, subiungit, multi dicunt, quis ostendit nobis bona? Cui quaestioni respondens, dicit, signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, domine, quasi lumen rationis naturalis, quo discernimus quid sit bonum et malum, quod pertinet ad naturalem legem, nihil aliud sit quam impressio divini luminis in nobis. Unde patet quod lex naturalis nihil aliud est quam participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura.”\]
The knowledge is completed in inclination, since it is practical knowledge, and the intellect cannot be practical save as a principle of appetite. This means, then, that the inclinations of which Thomas speaks, and which are useful as signs as we reflect on the natural knowledge (the knowledge itself is so self-evident that it is hardly noticed), help us focus upon definite natural lights: inclinations presuppose lights.227

Thus, contrary to what we attempted to establish in Chapter VI—i.e., that natural inclination is always prior to human cognition—it appears that for man, after all, natural inclination follows human knowledge. We must, then, briefly re-open the inquiry about human natural inclination in relation to cognition.

In Brock’s version of this argument, as discussed, the natural inclinations of man in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, are really “inclinations of the rational appetite.” In man’s case, the distinction between natural appetite and rational appetite collapses, or is at least muddled. William O’Connor, though his immediate concern is not natural law, makes a similar claim: human natural appetite only follows human knowledge. To clinch his argument, O’Connor also marshals several texts in which St. Thomas says the natural appetite or natural inclination of the sensitive and rational appetites follow upon a certain natural cognition or natural judgment. He relies especially on these texts:

There is a certain natural will in us, by which we seek that which in itself is good for man, insofar as he is man; and this follows the apprehension of reason, just as something considered absolutely follows apprehension of reason, as man desires knowledge, virtue, health, and things of this kind.228

Because the known good is the object of animal and rational appetites, where this good is always the same, there can be a natural inclination in appetite and a natural judgment in the cognitive power, as occurs in brutes.229

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228 In I Sent., d. 48, q. 1, a. 4 [Mand. 1.1089] (quoted in O’Connor, “Natural Desire for Happiness,” 99 n. 32): “Est et quaedam voluntas in nobis naturalis, qua appetimus id quod secundum se bonum est homini, inquantum est homo; et hoc sequitur apprehensionem rationis, prout est aliquud absolute considerans: sicut vult homo scientiam, virtutem, sanitatem et hujusmodi.”

229 De virt. comm., a. 6 [Marietti 722]: “quia aliquod bonum apprehensum oportet esse objectum appetitus animalis et rationalis; ubi ergo istud bonum uniformiter se habet, potest esse inclinatio naturalis in appetitu, et iudicium naturale in vi cognitiva, sicut accidit in brutis.”
A natural inclination in the appetitive power follows a natural conception in cognition.\(^{230}\)

Regarding the first text, O’Conner apparently equates “natural will” with the natural inclination of the will. Regarding the second text, he asserts that “the point of importance here is that the natural inclination of the sensitive and of the rational appetite is preceded by cognition called natural judgment.”\(^{231}\) O’Connor concludes that the third of these texts “is decisive and it leaves no room for a natural inclination of the appetitive power of sense or intellect . . . that is not preceded by cognition.”\(^{232}\)

**Quod erat demonstrandum?**

c. **Solution: Man’s natural cognition is, in a way, God’s cognition**

What indeed does St. Thomas mean by *conceptio naturalis* (or, equivalently, *cognitio naturalis*)? When he says that “a natural inclination in the appetitive power follows [sequitur] a natural conception in cognition,” is this natural cognition a human cognition or only a divine pre-existing cognition?\(^{233}\) Although a separate study of the terms *conceptio naturalis* and *cognitio naturalis* could be devoted to these questions, it is notable that there is relatively little discussion of this concept in the recent Thomistic literature.\(^{234}\) Much of it sheds little light on the subject. Jacques Maritain, for one, speaks of man’s “connatural” knowledge of natural law. The natural inclinations proper to man are in way rational, but,

\(^{230}\) *In IV Sent.,* d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 9 [Parma 7/2.968] (quoted in O’Connor, *Eternal Quest*, 211): “Naturalis inclinatio in appetitiva sequitur naturalem conceptionem in cognitione.”

\(^{231}\) O’Connor, “Natural Desire for Happiness,” 98 n. 28.

\(^{232}\) William O’Connor, *Eternal Quest*, 211.

\(^{233}\) *In IV Sent.,* d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 9 [Parma 7/2.968]: “Naturalis inclinatio in appetitiva sequitur naturalem conceptionem in cognitione.”

\(^{234}\) What there is tends to muddle the issue. Rafael-Tomas Caldera, in his book on “judgment by inclination,” effuses, “étant donné la nature humaine, certains objets attirent l’appétit, touchent d’emblée le clavier affectif du sujet.” *Le jugement par inclination chez St. Thomas d’Aquin*, 90. Oscar Brown wants to distinguish natural inclination from elicited desire, but does not quite explain the provenance of natural cognition: “naturalis conceptio, as a connatural cognitive grasp, is virtually simultaneous with its corresponding naturalis inclination. In this way the *inclinatio* is far from being an ‘elicited’ desire founded on the term of a cognitional discursus.” Oscar Brown, *Natural Rectitude*, 35.
paradoxically, pre-conscious: “essential inclinations of human nature . . . even if they
deal with animal instincts, are essentially human, and therefore, reason-permeated
inclinations; they are inclinations refracted through the crystal of reason in its unconscious or
pre-conscious life.” But is the reason in the “crystal of reason” man’s reason or the Divine reason?

Josef Gredt’s account of natural cognition has the considerable merit of drawing a
distinction between first and second actuality. Commenting on St. Thomas’s definition of
natural law as “nothing other than a conception naturally instilled in man,” (nil est aliud
quam conceptio homini naturaliter indita”) (In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1), Gredt writes,

The natural law is a conception or cognition in second act; it is said to be naturally instilled
not as if the cognition itself, whether in second act or in first act (idea), were innate, but
because the inclination and faculty [are] innate to man; he immediately, as soon as he
becomes aware, through the use of reason abstracting common notions from sensibles, of
practical order (such as the notion of good and evil) and formulated from these universal
principles of practical order.

Gredt, in other words, seems to be saying that the cognition is not a natural cognition, but
instead a natural capacity for cognition. This approach, though it preserves the ontological
character of natural inclination, is a somewhat pickwickian reading of the terms conceptio
and cognitio, understood as the cognitive prerequisite of natural inclination.

The solution to this quandary, I contend, is a correct understanding of what St.
Thomas means, in ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2, by the “light (lumen) of natural reason by which we

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the natural law “by” or “through” inclination. The ontological element is human nature functioning normally.
The gnoseological element pertains to man’s knowledge of natural law, but this knowledge is somehow pre-
conceptual. Natural law is natural “insofar as it is naturally known, that is known through inclination or through
connaturalitiy, not through conceptual knowledge and by way of reasoning.” J. Maritain, Natural Law, 20.

236 Josef Gredt, Elementa philosophiae aristotelico-thomistico (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1932),
par. 791: “Lex naturalis est conceptio seu cognitio in actu secundo; dicitur naturaliter indita non quasi ipsa
cognitio, sive in actu secundo sive in actu primo (idea), sit innata, sed quia innata est homini inclinatio et
facilitas statim, ubi primum rationis usus evigilat, abstrahendi ex sensibilibus notiones communimomas ordinis
practici (ut est notio boni et mali) et formulandi ex iis principia universalissima ordinis practici.”
discern good and evil,” as it relates to the “imprint of the divine light (impressio divini luminis).”²³⁷ Here I am indebted to Matthew Cuddeback’s study of light and form in St. Thomas.²³⁸ As a threshold matter, it should be noted that lumen (illumination) is distinct from lux (the light that illuminates).²³⁹ Cuddeback addresses the question of how we “naturally know” first principles. This knowledge is partly innate, and partly from experience, consistent with Gredt’s position. But Cuddeback shows that the divine illumination is not something that the rational creature, as rational, must “step up” to participate in, as if it were something separate from his nature.²⁴⁰ Man does not lift himself up from the muck of nature to share in the light of reason. Instead, the light, as an impressio or signatum, is itself man’s rational nature. The light is, at once, an extrinsic and intrinsic cause. The first principles are both “implanted” and “naturally known” in this sense: “our knowledge of first principles leaps forth naturally because of the sort of soul and intellectual power we have.”²⁴¹ More precisely, “the locus of the divine light’s impress and imparting of extrinsic measure is the inborn light of reason.”²⁴² The lumen “by which we discern good and evil” is at once the divine impressio and our very nature.

In a discussion of whether synderesis can be “extinguished,” St. Thomas makes clear that this light is itself part of human nature, not something shined upon an already constituted human nature:

²³⁷ Ibid.: “lumen rationis naturalis, quo discernimus quid sit bonum et malum, quod pertinet ad naturalem legem, nihil aliud sit quam impressio divini luminis in nobis.”
²³⁹ See In II Sent., d. 13, q. 1, a. 3: “ista . . . differunt, lux, lumen . . . Lux enim dicitur, secundum quod est in aliquo corpore lucido in actu, a quo alia illuminantur, ut in sole. Lumen autem dicitur, secundum quod est receptum in corpore diaphano illuminato.”
²⁴⁰ “Step up” is my own metaphor.
²⁴² Ibid., 203, n. 59.
That synderesis is extinguished can be understood in two ways. In one, it is considered insofar as it is an habitual light, and in this sense it is impossible for synderesis to be extinguished, just as it is impossible for the soul of a man to be deprived of the light of the agent intellect, through which first principles in speculative and practical matters are made known to us. For this light belongs to the nature of the soul, since by reason of this the soul is intellectual. In Psalms (4:7) it is said of this: “The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us,” so that it shows good things to us. For this was the answer to the question: “Many say: Who sheweth us good things?” (Psalms 4:6).243

In irrational things, the cognition is all God’s. But in man, the cognition is man’s but first at the level of his spiritual nature itself—prior to any psychological cognition, which to say, any cognition that consists of an act of a power of the soul.244

4. Inclinatio inest homini in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2

Turning back to man’s threefold inclination in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, I shall reconsider the Brock-Dewan argument in light of the foregoing discussion of man’s spiritual nature. Brock is correct to say that the inclinations in man in this locus classicus are inclinations of the will in the sense that they are inclinations of man’s rational nature. As discussed in previous chapters, the will naturally wills the good in general, which entails the constituents of that good at all three levels of man’s nature: to be, live, and know. But these inclinations

243 De ver., q. 16, a. 3 [Leon. 22/2,510:44-57]; “Dicendum quod synderesim extingui, potest intelligi dupliciter. Uno modo quantum ad ipsum lumen habituale; et sic impossibile est quod synderesis extinguatur: sicut impossibile est quod anima hominis privetur lumine intellectus agentis, per quod principia prima et in speculativis et in operativis nobis innotescunt; hoc enim lumen est de natura ipsius animae, cum per hoc sit intellectualis; de quo dicitur in Psalm.: signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, domine, quod scilicet nobis bona ostendit; hoc enim est responsio ad id quod dixerat: multi dicunt: quis ostendit nobis bona?”

244 It could be argued that the notion of a “pre-cognitive” natural inclination is similar to Maritain’s position. He argues that the natural inclinations proper to man are in way rational, but, paradoxically, pre-conscious: “essential inclinations of human nature . . . even if they deal with animal instincts, are essentially human, and therefore; reason-permeated inclinations; they are inclinations refracted through the crystal of reason in its unconscious or pre-conscious life.” Maritain, Range of Reason, 27. But it is not clear what he means by “crystal of reason.” Whose reason? He does not usually emphasize the notion of divine cognition of the end which is presupposed by natural inclination. In one text, however, he seems to be referring to the Divine reason: “uncreated Reason, the Reason of the Principle of Nature, is the only reasoning at play not only in establishing Natural Law (by the very fact that it creates human nature), but in making Natural Law known, through the inclinations of this very nature, to which human reason listens when it knows Natural Law.” Maritain, Natural Law, 22. See ibid., 60: “Is it essential to law to be an order of reason, and natural law, or the normality of functioning of human nature known by knowledge through inclination, is law, binding in conscience, only because nature and the inclinations of nature manifest an order of reason,—that is of Divine Reason.”
are at the level of nature, prior to any actual human cognition. They are not, then, strictly speaking, inclinations of the “rational appetite”—which St. Thomas repeatedly distinguishes from natural appetite, as shown. Man’s cognitive participation in the eternal law, “through which [he] has a natural inclination to his due act and end, begins in his very nature. Man does not pull himself up by his own bootstraps, as it were, after seeing that he is wearing boots. Instead, he is already his own nature, the natural inclination of which is the basis of all supervenient inclinations.

Conclusion: Threefold Prudence and the Humanly Natural

Accounts of natural law that focus on the pre-given-ness of human nature are typically subjected to the seemingly withering criticism that the natural inclinations by themselves do not generate “solutions” to concrete problems, as it were, that man must make his own way through prudence. In this straw-man, naturalistic version of natural law the critics describe, there is nothing left for man—using the reason and freedom proper to him—to “do” other than transcribe and execute the directives discerned in the several inclinations. Paradoxically, practical reason becomes a slave to the natural inclinations à la Hume, in Kai Nielsen’s version of this critique. The critique, whether it describes any version of Thomistic natural law that ever really existed, fails to account for St. Thomas’s actual

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245 There are innumerable variants of this critique, some motivated by a concern to dissent from Church teachings, others by a zeal for reclaiming the natural law tradition consistent with Church teachings. According to Jan Aertsen, “human good does not simply lie in the ends of the natural inclinations.” Natural Law and the Transcendals, 111. If by the “ends of the natural inclinations,” Aertsen means the end of each part and power of human nature considered in abstraction from the whole, he is correct. But the true end of human nature’s natural inclination considered in its integrity is the human good, which nature naturally inclines to achieve through the humanly natural means of art and prudence.

teaching on human nature (Chapter III) and what I have called the “humanly natural” (Chapter IV). Man, by nature a “conventional animal,” naturally derives and invents and devises innumerable determinationes of the natural law. He is a ruled ruler, but a ruler nonetheless in his own sphere of activity. On the given basis—rule and measure—of nature and its inclinations, he exercises his own “self-providence” in a wide field. Specifically, he exercises a threefold prudence, that is, in pursuit of (1) his own good as an individual, (2) the good of the species through the family, and (3) the good of the community, all ordered to the knowledge of his ultimate common good, God.247 This threefold prudence and its ultimate end correspond to the man’s threefold natural inclination as a substance, an animal, and an intellect. It is his nature to survive, reproduce, congregate, and seek the truth in a humanly natural way, but nature is the beginning of all of these activities. As St. Thomas writes, “what befits a thing naturally and immovably must be the root and principle of all else appertaining thereto, since the nature of a thing is the first in everything, and every movement arises from something immovable.”248

247 On man’s threefold prudence, see Russell Hittinger, “Natural Law and the Human City,” 29-42.
248 ST I, q. 82, a. 1 [Leon. 5.293]: “Oportet enim quod illud quod naturaliter alicui convenit et immobiliter, sit fundamentum et principium omnium aliorum, quia natura rei est primum in unoquoque, et omnis motus procedit ab aliquo immobili.”
CONCLUSION

Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret
et mala perrumpet furtim fastidia uictrix.
—Horace, *Epistulae* I.10

We began with St. Thomas’s statement in *ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 that “according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law” (*secundum ordinem inclinationum naturalium, est ordo praeceptorum legis naturae*). In this text, if *inclinationes naturales* is understood as “natural inclinations” in the prevalent sense of that term in modern English, the meaning of the text becomes an insoluble puzzle. How can the precepts of a law which is a participation in the eternal law follow from the brute urges and impulses within the creature? From this starting point, the options for interpreting q. 94, a. 2 tend to fall within one of two schools, both of which are well represented in the contemporary literature. The first option is to say, with the “drives and urges” school of John Finnis that the natural law follows, not from the brutality of natural inclination, but instead from an order imposed upon the inclinations by practical reason. The second option is say, with the “psychological” school of Stephen Brock that, in q. 94, a. 2, “natural inclinations” has a special meaning: it means the inclinations of the will, which follow upon apprehension.

These approaches to natural inclination fail to account for the meaning of St. Thomas’s NI-language in two indispensable respects: (1) in general “inclination” (*inclinatio*) is not merely an interior urge, but also an inclining by an exterior agent; and (2) in the case of “natural inclination,” to say that nature “inclines” or “has an inclination” is not a metaphor, but instead a description of a real inclination within nature towards a determinate end.

The first of these points has received virtually no attention in the natural law literature. The reason for this neglect may be that the extrinsic, transitive senses of
“inclination” and “incline” in English have nearly disappeared and that the term
inclinatio is almost entirely absent from the natural law auctoritates before St. Thomas. But as we saw in Chapter I, in medieval Latin, inclin-terms have a strong dual sense of subduing and submitting within a political order, a sense which seems to be an extension of the Scriptural and patristic senses of the heart being inclined by God or the Christian showing obedience through an inclination of the head. As we also saw in Chapters I and VII, St. Thomas uses inclin-language in these ways and carries this notion of inclinatio into his discussions of human and natural law in the treatise on law. Inclinatio naturalis is an inclining of the creature by the Divine Lawgiver to His own ends.

But how is this external inclining by a Divine Lawgiver anything other than a violent imposition upon man and his nature? As we saw in Chapters III and VII, there is no violence in natural inclination because the inclination is in and through nature itself. In the case of man, this nature is a composite unity: rational-animal-corporeal substance. Thus, in the sense in which St. Thomas uses NI-terms in the context of natural law, they refer to this whole human nature, not to a swarm of conflicting inclinations of the various parts and powers of man, considered severally. In q. 94, a. 2, the question presented is whether the natural law contains many precepts, or only one. It is objected that, because there are many precepts of the natural law, there must also be many natural laws.¹ In reply St. Thomas writes, “All these precepts of the law of nature have the character of one natural law, inasmuch as they flow

¹ STI-II q. 94 a. 2 arg. 1 [Leon. 7.169]: “Videtur quod lex naturalis non contineat plura praecepta, sed unum tantum. Lex enim continetur in genere praecepti, ut supra habitum est. Si igitur essent multa praecepta legis naturalis, sequeretur quod etiam essent multae leges naturales.”
from one first precept.”

His reply makes sense if we consider that natural inclination is the mode of God’s “command” (*praectum*) of nature and that the nature being commanded is the unity of human nature. Man’s *inclinationes naturales*, as we saw in Chapter III, all follow upon his substantial form. The order of these inclinations which St. Thomas refers to in q. 94, a. 2 is the order of nature given by God, which is to say, the order that is intrinsic to the unity of human nature.

This understanding of natural inclination as a being inclined by God through human nature leads us to the second indispensable point about the meaning of St. Thomas’s term *inclinatio naturalis*. Prescinding from the notion of a divine incliner, what does it mean to say that nature itself “inclines”? From a modern standpoint, to predicate “inclining” of nature is problematic. When St. Thomas speaks of the *inclinatio naturalis* of a stone to move downward, we “might say that such language is no more than anthropomorphic convenience, as when we speak of the mouth of a river or the bowels of the earth,” to use Charles de Koninck’s words. We have, after all, learned from the modern physical sciences that the stone’s rectilinear motion downward is a result of the “law” of gravity, which has nothing to do with purposive inclining or inclining towards an end that is, in any sense, predetermined by a knower. When St. Thomas speaks of the natural inclination of an inanimate substance to “strive” (*appetere*) for the center of the earth, all of our scientific training compels us to dismiss his statement as, at best, anthropomorphic or, at worst, nonsensical.

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2 *ST* I-II, 94, a. 2, ad 1 [Leon. 7.170]: “omnia ipsa praecepta legis naturae, inquantum referuntur ad unum primum praeceptum, habent rationem unius legis naturalis.”

When St. Thomas speaks of the natural inclination of an animal to mate or pursue its prey, we see that the animal “inclines” in a way that seems similar to the way in which human beings “incline,” that is, “towards” determinate objects the animal “sees,” “desires,” and “pursues.” But in the case of the animal, modern biology (or at least a narrow version of it) teaches us that what appears to be animal “cognition” and “purposive behavior” is really nothing but matter in motion according to certain “teleonomic” patterns of matter in motion. To speak of these material things in terms of “cognition” and “purpose” is, again, some would say, an anthropomorphic convenience, something we “project” onto the phenomena.

When he speaks of the natural inclination of the will to “good,” the matter is more complex. For the committed reductionist, even human things are nothing but matter in motion. “Will” is only a name for certain neurological processes. In this approach, to speak in human terms of human things is, paradoxically, as Robert Spaemann points out, yet another form of anthropomorphism.4

For Thomists, the reductionist approach is a dead end for purposes of understanding human things, especially morality. St. Thomas’s entire doctrine of “natural” moral law clearly has some connection with “nature.” There must, then, be some accounting for nature in the interpretation of his natural law theory. That leaves the Thomist three options for how to interpret the term inclinatio naturalis in q. 94, a. 2: the Finnis and Brock options, which fail to account for the meaning of inclinatio naturalis, and a third option which, as I argue, reflects the true meaning of NI-terms. The first option is to accept that only “[t]he reflective reason of man is . . . purposive, but the rest of nature sleeps in its mechanical and

mathematical order,” as Scott Buchanan writes.\textsuperscript{5} The Thomists who take this option thus retreat, with Finnis, to the human “kingdom of ends,” which is to say, the only place where there are any real, as opposed to imagined, purposes. In this kingdom, the natural “inclinations” are nothing more than what modern science understands them to be: non-teleological urges and drives. Because these inclinations are blind and brutal, they are fit only to be the slaves of practical reason. The only alternative, it is feared, would be that reason is enslaved by the blind and brutal inclinations. In this view, the threefold order St. Thomas describes in q. 94, a. 2 is an “irrelevant appendage” to what really matters for purposes of understanding the natural moral law, which is the work of practical reason.

The second option is to put aside questions regarding stones and chimps and such things and focus instead on human nature in its distinctively human mode. In Brock’s approach, the natural inclinations described in q. 94, a. 2 are natural only in the special mode of human action: these inclinations follow upon human cognition. The natural inclinations in q. 94, a. 2, are, then, the inclinations of the rational appetite.

The third option is, as I have attempted to argue in this dissertation, is to accept the language and structure of q. 94, a. 2 as St. Thomas presents it and as clarified by our philosophical and historical study of his use of the term \textit{inclinatio naturalis}. As we saw in Chapters I and III, for St. Thomas, natural inclination is not opposed to reason. Rather, man’s nature is a threefold unity: rational animal substance, which corresponds to three-fold order of the natural inclinations in q. 94, a. 2. The \textit{inclinatio} of human nature, as our study of St. Thomas’s understanding and usage of \textit{inclin}-terms showed, is both a disposition towards a determinate end and a “being inclined” by an exterior mover, God. Also, as we saw in

\textsuperscript{5} Scott Buchanan, \textit{So Reason Can Rule}, 303.
Chapter V, the natural inclinations of man are, properly speaking, only to the good. They are not, in and of themselves, brutal or unruly or wicked. These good ends are, as we saw in Chapter VII, pre-conceived by God. To attribute “intentionality” to nature is not to speak in metaphor; there is a real, divine intentionality impressed upon nature, expressed through natural form, causing natural motion towards natural ends. Our examination of the historical context of q. 94, a. 2 in Chapter II confirms that St. Thomas uses NI-language in his philosophical account of the divine *impressio* in part to reconcile Gratian’s starkly theological definition of natural law with that of Cicero, which emphasizes reason, and that of Ulpian, which emphasizes animality.

Regarding human cognition, we saw in Chapter IV that there is no conflict between the notion of a human, pre-cognitive “natural” (first sense) inclination (accomplished entirely by natural principles) and that of a “natural” (second sense) perfection of that inclination through human acts of apprehension and will. Human nature inclines man to accomplish “humanly natural” things through the exercise of his rational powers, but human nature itself is prior to any such exercise. As we saw in Chapter VI, St. Thomas distinguishes between natural inclination (i.e., natural appetite) and the inclinations of the sensitive and rational appetites. Finally, in Chapter VII, we saw that, when St. Thomas speaks of a “natural cognition” in man, he is referring not to an act of the rational power in man, but to the luminous natural intentionality, which is a cognition prior to man’s; it is, that is to say, a cognition in God, albeit one in which man participates: “Every inclination of nature requires some cognition that selects the end, inclines toward the end, and provides the means by
To the modern reader of q. 94, a. 2, Gratian’s definition of natural law as “that which is contained in the Law and Gospel” seems to be a baffling, untenably theological approach to natural law. As explained in Chapter II, St. Thomas takes care to distinguishes between those things in the divine law that are natural and those things that are “above nature.” But St. Thomas, in his account of natural law and natural inclination, does not turn away from the divine lawgiver to focus exclusively on nature by itself or on human reason’s rule over an unruly nature. Instead, for St. Thomas, natural inclination is the way in which God’s law is given to man, for “the law of God is to any dependent creature its natural inclination to doing that which befits it according to nature; and for this reason, as all things are kept by divine desire, thus they are kept by God’s laws.”

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6 In III Sent., d. 33, q. 2, a. 5 [Moos 3.1069]: “Omnis . . . naturae inclinatio praexigit aliquam cognitionem quae et finem praestitut, et in finem inclinet, et ea quibus ad finem pervenitur provideat: haec enim sine cognitione fieri non possunt. Propter quod etiam a philosophis dicitur, opus naturae esse opus intelligentiae.”

7 In De div. nom., cap. 10, lect. 1, n. 857 [Marietti 857]: “lex enim Dei est cuilibet creaturae infixa naturalis inclinatio ipsius ad agendum id quod convenit ei secundum naturam; et ideo, sicut omnia tenentur a desiderio divino, ita tenentur a legibus eius.”
APPENDIX

Index of Natural Inclinations According to St. Thomas Aquinas

Purpose. In ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, St. Thomas states that reason naturally apprehends as good “all those things to which man has a natural inclination” (omnia illa ad quae homo habet naturalem inclinationem) and that the precepts of the natural law are “according to the order of the natural inclinations” (secundum ordinem inclinationum naturalium). He then describes three levels of inclination “in man” (inest homini) in terms of three levels of nature: substantial, animal, and rational. In recent decades, this text has generated an enormous amount of commentary and controversy, but relatively little attention has been given to the meaning of the term inclinatio naturalis throughout the corpus. The purpose of this Index is to provide a “map,” as it were, of the various natural inclinations (“NIs”) described in the corpus that correspond in some way to each of these three levels and thereby to help better understand what Thomas means by inclinatio naturalis in q. 94, a. 2.

Subject matter. The Index identifies and categorizes the texts in which St. Thomas speaks of the “natural inclination” (inclinatio naturalis) of a being towards an end, where “end” is meant in a wide sense to include, for example, the terminus of a natural motion, the object or proper operation of a power, or the final end of human life.

Formal sense vs. material sense of NI. As explained in this dissertation, not every inclination Thomas describes as “natural” is a natural inclination in the sense proper to natural law. For St. Thomas, nature can mean either form or matter. Correspondingly, in the case of man, natural inclination can mean either (i) the inclination common to the species, which follows upon man’s form as rational animal substance or (ii) the inclination of a particular individual to something on account of his natural temperament.

As ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 shows, the natural inclination common to the species is the sense of natural inclination that is proper to the natural law: “to the natural law pertains all those things to which man is inclined according to his nature,” which is to say “according to his form” (secundum suam formam). The form proper to man is his rational soul, according to which he has a natural inclination to act according to reason.” In this Index, where a natural inclination is natural only in the sense that it follows upon a material principle, it is marked “material sense” in brackets.

1 For example, an operation is an end inasmuch as it is the perfection of a motion, not the motion itself. See In I De anima, lect. 6, n. 82. See, e.g., In I Meta., lect. 1, n. 3: “quaelibet res naturalem inclinationem habet ad suam propriam operationem: sicut calidum ad calefaciendum, et grave ut deorsum moveatur.”

2 See ST I-II, q. 63, a. 1 [Leon. 6.406]: “aliquid dictur alicui homini naturale dupliciter, uno modo, ex natura speciei; alio modo, ex natura individui. Et quia unumquodque habet speciem secundum suam formam, individuaturn vero secundum materiam; forma vero hominis est anima rationalis, materia vero corpus, id quod convenit homini secundum animam rationalem, est ei naturale secundum rationem speciei; id vero quod est ei naturale secundum determinatam corporis complexionem, est ei naturale secundum naturam individui.”

3 For example, where Thomas says that man has a “natural inclination” to sin or evil on account of his bodily complexion, or that he has a “natural inclination” from birth to a certain virtue or vice, it is a natural inclination only in the material sense, which is to say that it is not what he means by natural inclination in ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2. See Chapters III and V for further discussion of this point.
Texts included. The index includes texts which meet two criteria: (1) the text is a case of an NI-term as defined in Chapter I; and (2) the text refers in some way to an end. For example a text which refers to the inclinatio naturalis of a stone to move “downward” (deorsum) meets both criteria. In a few of the included inclin-texts, there is no natur-term, but the naturalness of the inclination can be inferred from the context. However, only texts with an inclin-term are included, even if the context shows that a similar term is used synonymously.

Texts not included. This Index does not include a substantial number of NI texts, namely those in which St. Thomas does not mention a thing which is naturally inclined to some other thing. Many of these texts are philosophically important and fall squarely within his ordinary usage of the natural inclination terms. Also, only those cases in which the inclination mentioned is a natural inclination are included (as opposed to, e.g., an inclination of the will to a particular thing or an inclination of grace).

Descriptions. For each text cited, a brief description is given of the natural inclination identified. Where the natur-term is implied from context, the description is marked “implied NI” in brackets. Many texts appear more than once in this outline; the same text is quoted in as many places as may be relevant. Texts of objections are set in italics.

Order of presentation. The texts in this Index are arranged by subject matter. The texts are classified, as far as possible, according to the “grade” of the being that has the natural inclination and, within each grade, the end toward which the being is inclined. Inclinations that are

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4 As explained in Chapter I, in some texts the natur-term is implied in the context. For example, if Thomas refers to a stone’s inclination downward in virtue of its heaviness without using the term naturalis to describe such inclination (e.g., De ver., q. 22, a. 8 [Leon. 22/3.631:57-64]), there can be no doubt that he means the natural inclination of the stone because the numerous other texts in which he refers to the natural inclination of the stone, as a heavy body, downwards.

5 For example a text that refers to the appetitus naturalis of the stone to fall downwards, or that it is naturale to fire to be borne upwards, is not included if no inclin-term is also present. See, e.g., De ver., q. 12, a. 3 [Leon. 22/2.375:210]: “naturale est igni ferri sursum.”

6 For example, in one text, St. Thomas speaks of natural inclination in irrational creatures and compares this natural inclination to a different kind of inclination, but does not specify the thing towards which those creatures are inclined. ST I-II, q. 58, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 6.376]: “inclinatio naturae in rebus carentibus ratione, est absque electione, et ideo talis inclinatio non requirit ex necessitate rationem.”

7 Notably, the language of natural inclination is pervasive in Aquinas’s major theological and philosophical works at all phases of his career—often in connection with discussions of natural law. However, there are no NI-cases in his commentaries on the De memoria, Analytica posteriora, De interpretatione, De generatione et corruptione, or Meteora. NI terms appear occasionally in many (but not all) of the disputed questions, as well as in many of his biblical commentaries.

8 Aquinas speaks of different “grades” of being. For example, “mixed bodies are more perfect than elements, plants more perfect than minerals, animals than plants, and men than other animals.” ST I, q. 47, a. 2 [Leon. 4.487]. A more detailed index could include other classifications which could also be useful to natural law scholars. For example, a number of NI texts directly refer to a natural law precepts. See, e.g., ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]; but see In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 2 [Parma 7/2.919]: “inclinatio naturae ad matrimonium non obligat per modum praecepti.” For a list of forty natural law precepts in Thomas’s writings, see Vernon Bourke, Ethics in Crisis (St. Louis: Bruce Publishing Co., 1966), 116-19. In other cases, bearing on the issue of how we know whether an inclination is natural, Thomas says that a natural inclination is known because it is observed “for the most part.”
common to all (created) beings are also identified. A few natural inclination texts that fall outside this classification scheme, but are nevertheless relevant, are separately identified (e.g., “things to which there is no NI”). Within each sub-group of texts the citations are listed in chronological order from the Commentary on the Sentences through the Commentary on the De Caelo.

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I. BODIES. These are texts in which a natural inclination is attributed to a body considered as a body. Terms Thomas uses to indicate bodies include “bodies” (corpora), “natural bodies” (corpora naturalia), “inanimate bodies” (corpora inanimata), “elements” (elementa), and, where the context makes clear that the nature is that of a body, “naturals” (naturalia) and “natural things” (res naturalia). There are “simple bodies” (corpora simplicia) and “mixed bodies” (corpora mixta), heavy (gravis) and light (levis) bodies, and celestial bodies (corpora caelestia), as well as specific types of bodies, such as stones (lapides) and fire (ignis). (Animate bodies, considered as bodies, are separately categorized under animates and rational animals below except to the extent the text mentions a simple body).  

A. Bodies: Ends

1. NI of Natural Thing is Determined to One Thing According to its Form

- Natural thing’s inclination to some determinate thing is one (De ver., q. 25, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.729:136-38])
- NI following upon the natural form of a thing that lacks cognition is determined to one thing (ST I, q. 80, a. 1 [Leon. 5.282])
- NI is naturally in natural thing consequent upon its form (ST I, q. 87, a. 4 [Leon. 5.363])
- Inclination to one thing follows from the form of a natural thing (De malo, q. 6 [Leon. 23.148:278-80])
- NI of natural thing to one act (De malo, q. 6 [Leon. 23.148:284-87])
- Natural form is naturally inclined to only one thing (De spir. creat., a. 6 [Leon. 24/2.69:215-16])
- Inclination of natural thing is consequent on form and is therefore to one thing (De virt. comm., a. 9 [Marietti 731])

2. NI of Natural Thing to Natural End in General

- Natural body lacking cognition has inclination to natural end from natural mover (SCG III, cap. 24, n. 4 [Leon. 14.62])
- NI of natural body to proper end (SCG III, cap. 26, n. 15 [Leon. 14.72])
- NI of natural thing to end (SCG III, cap. 143, n. 2 [Leon. 14.427])

See, e.g., In VII Ethic., lect. 13, n. 12 [Leon. 47/2.432:135-36]: “id quod invenitur ut in omnibus aut in pluribus videtur esse ex inclinatione naturae.”

9 See In De caelo, pr. 5 on the distinction between bodies with respect to place (heavy and light) and (covered in the De caelo) and other properties (covered in other works).
3. NI to Natural Place

- NI of natural body to proper place (SCG III, cap. 26, n. 15 [Leon. 14.72])
- NI of natural thing to its end (e.g., heavy body to the middle) (SCG III, cap. 143, n. 2 [Leon. 14.427])
- Natural form inclines to be in some place (not to motion for the sake of motion) (De spir. creat., a. 6 [Leon. 24/2.69:215-16])
- NI of part or whole of a heavy body to the place in which it is naturally at rest (e.g., clod of earth and whole earth to the center) (In I De caelo, lect. 5, n. 6 [Leon. 3.21])
- NI of body that naturally moves upward or downward place (In I De caelo, lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 3.47])
- NI of bodies that are parts of the world to move to one terminus (In I De caelo, lect. 17, n. 2 [Leon. 3.68])
- NI of simple bodies to determinate place (In I De caelo, lect. 17, n. 8 [Leon. 3.69])

4. NI to Proper Operation

- NI of natural thing through specific form to its proper operation (SCG IV, cap. 19, n. 2 [Leon. 15.74])
- NI of natural things to be moved and to act (Quodlibet I, q. 4, a. 3, ad 3 [Leon. 25/2.189:96-101])
- NI of natural thing to its proper operation (In I Meta., lect. 1, n. 3 [Marietti 6])

5. NI to Pursue What is Fitting and Avoid What is Unfitting

- NI of natural thing to what is suitable for it (De ver., q. 22, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.613:69-70])
- NI of corruptible thing to acquire what is suitable and avoid what is not suitable and to resist corruptive contrary agencies (ST I, q. 81, a. 2 [Leon. 5.289])
- NI of natural thing proportionate to act and motion convenient to its nature (ST II-II, q. 26, a. 6 [Leon. 8.214-15])
- Natural thing is apt to that to which it has an inclination (In Hebr. [rep. vulg.], cap. 13, lect. 3, n. 567 [Marietti 2.505])

6. NI to Remain in Being According to Nature

- Out of the NI of its principles, natural thing has natural desire (desiderium) to remain in being (SCG II, cap. 55, n. 13 [Leon. 13.395])
- NI of natural thing to return quickly to natural condition (In II De sensu, lect. 6, n. 10)

7. NI to Communicate Good to Others

- NI of natural thing not only to its own good but also to “spread abroad its good amongst others” (ST I, q. 19, a. 2 [Leon. 4.233])
B. Bodies: Principles

1. Bodies: Principles in General

- Natural appetite of body without apprehension is solely from NI of natural principles (SCG II, cap. 55, n. 13 [Leon. 13.395])
- NI of a body arises (oritur) from an affinity and fittingness from its form, called principle of inclination (SCG IV, cap. 19, n. 3 [Leon. 15.74])
- Created powers incline to natural end (as the tree “expects” to bear fruit or fire “expects” to move upwards) (In Rom., cap. 8, lect. 4, n. 660 [Marietti, 120])

2. Bodies: Heavy and Light

a. Bodies: heavy and light: in general

- Natural motion of heavy and light bodies through form by which they are inclined to such motion (In IV Sent., d. 44, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 3, ad 2 [Parma 7/2.1097])
- NI of heavy and light to what is suitable to them, i.e., to go (vadere) themselves to their due ends (not merely to be led) (De ver., q. 22, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.613:69-74])
- Inclination to place is through heaviness and lightness (i.e., through something extrinsic added to essence) (ST I, q. 59, a. 2 [Leon. 5.93])
- Heavy and light bodies have an inclination to place (In III Phys., lect. 1, n. 8 [Leon. 2.103])
- NI is greater due to heaviness or lightness (In IV Phys., lect. 12, n. 13 [Leon. 2.187])
- Inclination of a heavy or light body to motion is from first generator, which gives it the form upon which that inclination follows (In VIII Phys., lect. 8, n. 7 [Leon. 2.393])

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10 In several early texts, Thomas says that heavy and light things are naturally inclined to move according to an active principle. See In III Sent., d. 22, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 1 [Moos 3.683-84] (“motus dupliciter naturalis. Uno modo quia in eo quod movetur est principium activum motus; et sic corpora gravia et levia moventur naturaliter. Alio modo quia in eo quod movetur, est dispositio naturalis, per quam aliquod est mobile ab aliquo movente; et hoc contingit dupliciter.”); De ver., q. 12, a. 3 [Leon. 22/2.375:200-10] (“aliquid dicitur naturale dupliciter. Uno modo, quia eius principium activum est natura; sicut naturale est igni ferri sursum”). Also, fire heats by an active principle. See ST I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 6.60]: “naturale dicitur quod est secundum inclinationem naturae . . . . Dicitur autem aliquid naturale dupliciter. Uno modo, quia est a natura sicut a principio activo, sicut caelefacentia est naturale igni. Alio modo, secundum principium passivum, quia scilicet est in natura inclinatio ad recipiendum actionem a principio extrinseco, sicut motus caeli dicitur esse naturalis, propter aptitudinem naturalem caelestis corporis ad talem motum.” But other texts say that natural motion of heavy and light bodies is according to a passive principle. See In II Phys., lib. 2 lect. 1 n. 4 (“In corporibus vero gravibus et levibus est principium formale sui motus sed huissmodi principium formale non potest dici potentia activa, ad quam pertinet motus iste, sed comprehenditur sub potentia passiva: gravitas enim in terra non est principium ut moveat, sed magis ut moveatur”); In V Meta., lect. 14, n. 955 [Marietti 305] (“Potentia igitur, secundum quod est principium motus in eo in quo est, non comprehenditur sub potentia activa, sed magis sub passiva. Gravitas enim in terra non est principium ut moveat, sed magis ut moveatur”); In I Phys., lect. 8, n. 8 “Nihil horum, scilicet gravium et levium, movet seipsum; sed tamen motus eorum est naturalis, quia habent principium motus in seipsis”); In I De caelo, lect. 3 n. 4 (“principium activum motus caelestium corporum est intellectus substantia: principium autem passivum est natura illius corporis, secundum quam natum est tali motu moveri. Et esset simile in nobis si anima non moveret corpus nostrum nisi secundum naturalem inclinationem eius, scilicet deorsum”).
• Heavy or light body has a more vehement motion towards an end, the stronger its inclination towards that end (De carit., a. 9 [Marietti 777])
• NI to local motion is according to heaviness and lightness (In I De caelo, lect. 6, n. 1 [Leon. 3.22])
• NI of heavy to move to the middle and of light to move to the extremity (In I De caelo, lect. 17, n. 2 [Leon. 3.68])
• NI of heavy to middle and of light to boundary, with respect to one middle (In I De caelo, lect. 17, n. 5 [Leon. 3.69])
• Heavy and light bodies are inclined by heaviness and lightness to their natural motions (In II De caelo, lect. 5, n. 1 [Leon. 3.243])
• Heavy and light bodies are inclined to move with a straight motion to their appropriate and determinate places (i.e., heavy to the center and light from the center) (In III De caelo, lect. 7, nn. 1-2 [Leon. 3.250])

b. Bodies: heavy (grave or ponderosa)

i. Bodies: heavy: NI downward towards the middle in general

• NI of heavy body to the end; what retards the motion of a heavy body does not take away its gravity and inclination to the end (In II Sent., d. 42, q. 1, a. 3, ad 5 [Mand. 2.1059])
• NI to be borne downward is stronger, the greater the necessity with which it is borne downward (De ver., q. 22, a. 5, ad s.c. 2 [Leon. 22/3.626:344-49])
• NI of heaviness according to the ratio of essential nature (due to likeness to the earth) (In De hebd., lect. 2 [Leon. 50.274:302-5])
• Heavy thing desires (appetit) to be downward solely from NI of principles (SCG II, cap. 55, n. 13 [Leon. 13.395])
• NI to its proper end (i.e., its proper place) (SCG III, cap. 26, n. 15 [Leon. 14.72])
• If body becomes light through corruption, NI to the middle is lost, but if the body is only impeded, NI to the middle remains (SCG III, cap. 143, n. 2 [Leon. 14.427])
• NI according to form by which it moves to inferior place (SCG IV, cap. 19, n. 3 [Leon. 15.74])
• By nature the heavy thing inclines to rest in the middle and consequently inclines to downward motion (De pot., q. 5, a. 5 [Marietti 142])
• Heavy body is moved downwards by its own NI (not forced) (ST I, q. 105, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 5.474])
• If outside its place, by NI a heavy body has a similitude with heavy body resting in its place (ST I-II, q. 27, a. 3 [Leon. 6.194])
• NI of heavy body to downward place is from heaviness (ST I-II, q. 36, a. 2 [Leon. 6.250])
• If a heavy body loses its inclination to tend downwards, it can be borne upwards without violence (i.e., naturally) (ST I-II, q. 36, a. 4 [Leon. 6.252])
• NI of heavy body downward from heaviness as principle (In Hebr. [rep. vulgata], cap. 13, lect. 3, n. 769 [Marietti, 2.505])
• NI of heavy body downward (De malo, q. 3, a. 14 [Leon. 23.98:221-23])
• NI to its proper operation, i.e., to be moved downwards (In I Meta., lect. 1, n. 3 [Marietti 6])
• Inclination of heavy body to descend downward [implied NI] (In V Meta., lect. 20, n. 1083 [Marietti 333])
• Heavy as NI has two meanings—(i) without qualification, the heavy thing has an NI to be moved to the center; (ii) in comparison (e.g., earth is heavier than water and lead is heavier than wood) (In X Meta., lect. 2, n. 1942 [Marietti 560])
• Natural appetite of heavy thing inclines to the middle without pre-existent knowledge (De virt. comm., a. 6 [Marietti 722])
• NI downwards is by passive principle (In I De caelo, lect. 3, n. 4 [Leon. 3.10])
• NI to middle (regardless of size) (In II De caelo, lect. 27, n. 7 [Leon. 3.224])
• NI of heavy thing to the place of earth (constitutes spherical figure of earth) (In II De caelo, lect. 28, n. 1 [Leon. 3.226])

ii. Bodies: heavy: stone (lapis)

• NI of stone to be moved towards its perfection (i.e., downwards) (with cognition in another which is the principle causing the inclination) (In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 3, a. 1, q.c. 1 [Parma 7/2.1214])
• The one who gave the stone heaviness inclined it to be borne downward naturally (De ver., q. 22, a. 1 [Leon. 22/3.613:164-66])
• NI of stone to downward place remains if moved violently upwards (implied) (De ver., q. 22, a. 8 [Leon. 22/3.631:57-60])
• NI of stone to be borne to a place below and order to something convenient to itself (De ver., q. 25, a. 1 [Leon. 22.3.729:133-36])
• NI of stone to be borne downward is hindered by opposing power which moves it violently (Q. d. de anima, q. 21 [Leon. 24/1.180:259-60])
• NI of stone is violated in two ways—(i) if thrown upward; (ii) if thrown downward faster than normal (ST II-II, q. 175, a. 1 [Leon. 10.402])
• Stone moves downward if not impeded (Quodlibet II, q. 7, a. 1 [Leon. 25/2.232:62-64])
• NI to be borne downward naturally (In II Ethic., lect. 1, n. 4 [Leon. 47/1.77:71-114])
• NI of stone downwards is by passive principle (In II Ethic., lect. 1, n. 5 [Leon. 47/1.77:71-114])
• NI downwards is according to form and cannot be changed by custom (De virt. comm., a. 9 [Marietti 731-32])

iii. Bodies: heavy: elemental earth (terra)

• NI of earth to the center (De ver., q. 27, a. 2 [Leon. 22/3.794:115-21])
• Earth’s downward motion necessarily follows from sufficient principle (unless impeded by something else) [implied NI] (De ver., q. 24, a. 10, ad 1 [Leon. 22/3.707:335-37])
• Earth has a stronger inclination of heaviness than water (ST II-II, q. 26, a. 6 [Leon. 8.214-15])
• NI of the Earth (as a whole) and a clod of earth (i.e., as a part) to be moved to the middle if it is outside its place (In I De caelo, lect. 5, n. 6 [Leon. 3.21])
• NI of earth to something definite (i.e., to place opposite of place where it was before) (In I De caelo, lect. 17, n. 8 [Leon. 3.69])
• NI of heavy parts of the Earth (as a whole) to the middle, constituting spherical shape) (In II De caelo, lect. 27, n. 3 [Leon. 3.223])
• Inclination of earth (either as part or whole) to the middle in accordance with the inclination all heavy bodies have (implied NI) (In II De caelo, lect. 27, n. 7 [Leon. 3.224])
• NI of the Earth (as a whole) to spherical shape (In II De caelo, lect. 28, n. 1 [Leon. 3.226])

iv. Bodies: heavy: elemental water

• NI downward (contrary to tidal motion) (ST I, q. 105, a. 6, ad 1 [Leon. 5.477])
• NI downwards (depends on impression of celestial body) (ST I, q. 105, a. 6, ad 1 [Leon. 5.477])
• Earth has a stronger inclination of heaviness than water (ST II-II, q. 26, a. 6 [Leon. 8.214-15])
• Inclination of water downward not as strong as that of earth (In X Meta., lect. 2, n. 1942 [Marietti 560])
• NI to fall (is overcome if the water vessel is rotated more rapidly than the downward motion of the water) (In II De caelo, lect. 1, n. 9 [Leon. 3.122])
• NI of water to return to natural condition (i.e., NI to be cool) (In II De sensu, lect. 6, n. 10)

v. Bodies: heavy: miscellaneous (lead and wood)

• Lead has a stronger downward inclination than wood (In X Meta., lect. 2, n. 1942 [Marietti 560])

c. Bodies: light (leve)

i. Bodies: light (leve): in general

• NI to proper place when separated from proper place (ST I, q. 76, a. 1, ad 6 [Leon. 5.210])
• Inclination or aptitude to be above (sursum) (implied NI) (ST I-II, q. 23, a. 4 [Leon. 6.176])

ii—Bodies: light: fire (ignis) to move upwards

• NI of fire to be moved upwards always (unless impeded) (De ver., q. 1, a. 5, ad 12 [Leon. 22/1.20:359-61])
• Fire’s NI, the property by which tends upwards (*De pot.*, q. 5, a. 4 [Marietti 138-39])
• NI of fire to seek its own good, i.e., to be up (*esse sursum*) (*ST* I, q. 60, a. 4 [Leon. 5.103])
• NI of fire to a higher place (*ST* I, q. 80, a. 1 [Leon. 5.282])
• NI of fire to recede from lower place and tend to superior place (*ST* I, q. 81, a. 2 [Leon. 5.289])
• NI of fire to be moved upwards (not downwards) without choice (*ST* I-II, q. 13, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 6.99])
• NI of fire to be moved upwards without apprehension (*ST* I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273])
• NI of fire to some natural end; thus it is said fire “expects” a high place (*In Rom.*, cap. 8, lect. 4, n. 660 [Marietti, 120])
• NI of fire to move upward is from both natural form and Him who gave the form (*De malo*, q. 3, a. 3 [Leon. 23.73:224-28])
• NI of fire to move upwards follows upon form (*De spir. creat.*, a. 6 [Leon. 24/2.69:214-16])
• NI of fire to operation of upward motion (following on form, which gives it lightness) (*In II De anima*, lect. 5, n. 8 [Leon. 45/1.88:104-112])
• Fire inclined by God (who gave the inclination) to move upwards (*De virt. card.*, a. 2 [Marietti 819])
• NI of fire to something determinate (i.e., to place opposite from where it was previously) (*In I De caelo*, lect. 17, n. 8 [Leon. 3.69])

**iii— Bodies: light: fire: other properties**

**AA. NI of fire to generate fire and flesh**
• NI of fire to communicate its form to another (*ST* I, q. 60, a. 4 [Leon. 5.103])
• NI of fire to generate fire (*ST* I, q. 62, a. 2 [Leon. 5.99])
• NI of fire to generate flesh, but only as moved instrumentally by the nutritive soul (*ST* I, q. 62, a. 2 [Leon. 5.111])
• NI of fire to generate something similar to itself (*ST* I, q. 80, a. 1 [Leon. 5.282])

**BB. NI of fire “to heat” (v., calefacere) and be “hot” (calidus)**
• By natural inclination fire has an “absolute certitude” of heating (likewise hope is said to hope by the certitude of natural inclination) (*In III Sent.* d. 26, q. 2, a. 4, ad 2 [Moos 3.842-43])
• NI of fire to heat (*ST* I, q. 62, a. 2 [Leon. 5.111])
• NI of fire to heat by active principle (*ST* I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 6.60])
• NI of fire to whatever operation is convenient to its form, as fire to heat (*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 6.171])
• From natural form fire has NI to one act, to be always hot (*De malo*, q. 6 [Leon. 23.148:300-4])
• NI of fire to proper operation, i.e., to make warm (*In I Meta.*, lect. 1, n. 3 [Marietti 6])
CC. NI of fire to resist corruption and impediments

- NI of fire to resist corruption and impediments (ST I, q. 81, a. 2 [Leon. 5.289])

C. Bodies: Celestial Bodies

1. Bodies: NIs of Celestial Bodies

- Natural aptitude of celestial body for circular motion from passive principle, not from NI to a particular place (De pot., q. 5, a. 5 [Marietti 142])
- NI of celestial body according to passive principle to receive action from an extrinsic principle (ST I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 6.60])
- Inclination of celestial nature of Christ’s body and the bodies of the saints to move upwards from the nature of the fifth body (ST III, q. 57 a. 3 [Leon. 11.531]) (Aquinas rejects this opinion)
- Local motion of fifth body is not from NI of lightness or heaviness (In I De caelo, lect. 6, n. 1 [Leon. 3.22])
- No NI of celestial body to fall (In II De caelo, lect. 1, n. 9 [Leon. 3.122])

2. Bodies: Celestial Bodies: NIs Caused by Celestial Bodies

- NI of inferior body to receive impression from superior (celestial) body (SCG II, cap. 30, n. 15 [Leon. 13.339])
- NI of inferior body depends on impression of celestial body (ST I, q. 105, a. 6, ad 1 [Leon. 5.477])
- Inclinations to certain effects in lower bodies caused by celestial bodies (e.g., fertility, sterility) (In II De sensu, lect. 1, n. 8)

D. Diaphanous Bodies

- NI of diaphanous (transparent) body to receive light; root of NI remains even if clouds obstruct light (ST I-II, q. 85, a. 2 [Leon. 7.112])

E. Bodies: Conflicts of NIs Within Same Body

- Tidal ebb and flow is outside the natural (downward) motion of water, for it is from the impression of a celestial body, on which the NI of inferior bodies depends (ST I, q. 105, a. 6, ad 1 [Leon. 5.477])
- NI of mixed body is according to the natural motion of the simple body predominant in its composition (In III De caelo, lect. 5, n. 1 [Leon. 3.243])
II. LIVING BODIES. These texts pertain to the natural inclinations of living bodies considered as living. First are plants. Next are animals generally, followed by various grades of animals (imperfect and perfect). The natural inclinations of man considered as an animal are separately classified under rational animals except where the text mentions another animal by way of explanation or example.

A. Living Bodies: in General

- NI of a thing that is healed to something determinate (In I De caelo, lect. 17, n. 8 [Leon. 3.69])

B. Living Bodies: Plants

- Tendency to divine good by NI through the “work of life” (In De div. nom., cap. 4, lect. 3, n. 318 [Marietti 104])
- NI to natural motion of growth wholly perfected by nature without apprehension (ST I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273])
- NI, called natural appetite, to good solely through natural habitude (ST I, q. 59, a. 2 [Leon. 5.93])
- NI of tree to bear fruit (In Rom., cap. 8, lect. 4, n. 660 [Marietti, 120])

C. Living Bodies: Animals

1. Living Bodies: Animals: in General

- NI of animal is to particular good only (ST I, q. 59, a. 1 [Leon. 5.92])
- NI of animal’s sensitive nature is to particular good and to evil insofar as the evil is joined to the good (ST I, q. 63, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 5.129])
- NI of brute animal to some particular good according to sensitive nature (ST I, q. 63, a. 4 ad 3)
- NI of each power of animal soul to what is convenient to itself (ST I, q. 80, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.282])
- NI of brute animal appetite to one thing (ST I-II, q. 13, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 6.99])
- NI of animal body to natural motion of growth (ST I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273-74])
- NI to those things which “nature teaches all animals”—union of male and female, education of children, and similar things (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170])
- Temperance is against the inclination of animal (bestialis) nature not governed by reason (ST II-II, q. 141, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 10.122])
- NI of all animals of the same species is to the same operations and pleasures (In X Ethic., lect. 8, n. 11 [Leon. 47/2.576:117-19])
- All things of the same species have the same unchanging good and hence a NI to that good and a natural judgment in the cognitive power with respect to that uniform good (De virt. comm., a. 6 [Marietti 722])
2. Living Bodies: Animals: Imperfect Animals

- NI of imperfect animals (e.g., ants and bees) to prudent works without apprehension (*In III De anima*, lect. 5, n. 8 [Leon. 45/1.194:97-115])
- NI of spider (**aranea**) to spin its web in the same way (*De virt. comm.*, a. 6 [Marietti 722])

3. Living bodies: Animals: Perfect Animals

- NI of any perfect animal of a species to carnal union (*SCG* III, cap. 126, n. 3 [Leon. 14.389])
- NI of fox to seek food with a certain sagacity joined with deceit (*ST* I, q. 63, a. 4, ad 3 [Leon. 5.129])
- NI of dog to ferocity (*ST* I, q. 63, a. 4, ad 3 [Leon. 5.129])
- NI of dog to be furious is a certain natural law for the dog (but fury is against the natural law for the sheep and other meek animals) (*ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.158])
- NI of animals to particular virtues or vices (e.g., NI of lion to virtue of boldness and vice of cruelty) (*De virt. comm.*, a. 8, ad 10 [Marietti 728-29])
- NI of the stork to warm, nourish, and support its aged parents (*In III Sent.*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 7 and ad 1) [Moos 3.941-42])
- NI of the swallow (**hirundo**) to build its nest in the same way (*De virt. comm.*, a. 6 [Marietti 722])

4. Living Bodies: Animals: Conflicts of NIs Within Same Animal

- Animal motion is against NI of the body, but is natural to the animal (*ST* I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 6.60])
- NI of animate body to move itself is contrary to the NI of the same body insofar as it is a body (*In III Sent.*, d. 22, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 1 [Moos 3.683-84])
- Nature of animal members determined by relation to an act, not a place or position (*In I De caelo*, lect. 17, n. 5)
III. MAN

A. Man: Particular Nature Distinguished From Universal Nature

- NI of man’s particular nature (as contrasted with universal nature) to pain, sorrow, and fear in apprehension of death or corruption (*ST* I-II, q. 42, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 6.277])
- NI of man’s particular nature according to form is distinct from the NI of universal nature according to matter (*ST* I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116])

B. Man: Composite of Rational Animal Substance

- Threefold order of NIs (*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170])
- Twofold *iustum* is that to which nature inclines, animal and rational (*In V Ethic.*, lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:57-75])

C. Man: Substance

- NI to good according to the nature man shares with all substances (i.e., to those things through which life is conserved and contraries impeded) (*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170])
- Suicide is against NI because each thing naturally loves itself and preserves itself in being and resists corruption insofar as it can (*ST* II-II, q. 64, a. 5 [Leon. 9.71-72])
- NI to maintenance of the individual and the species (*ST* II-II, q. 155, a. 2 [Leon. 10.254])
- Nature chiefly inclines to the fear of mortal dangers (*ST* II-II, q. 166, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.344])
- Nature inclines to the love of wealth insofar as through those things man preserves human life (*In IV Ethic.*, lect. 5, n. 2 [Leon. 47/2.215:23-25])

D. Man: Self

- NI to self-love (*In III Sent.*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 5, s.c. 3 [Moos 3.934])
- Falling short of loving oneself and the things directed thereto in due measure is contrary to NI (*ST* II-II, q. 126, a. 1 [Leon. 10.47])
- NI to love God more than self (*Quodlibet* I, q. 4, a. 3 [Leon. 25/2:188:50-57])

E. Man: Individual

- NI to things necessary for the individual (e.g., food) (*ST*, II-II, q. 155, a. 2 [Leon. 10.254])

F. Man: Species

- NI to things necessary for the species (e.g., venereal acts) (*ST*, II-II, q. 155, a. 2 [Leon. 10.254])
G. Man: Body

1. Man: Body: NI to Move Downwards

- Inclination of body downwards according to predominant elements (in contrast to the purported NI of the celestial nature of Christ’s glorified human body to rise up to heaven) [implied NI] (*ST* III, q. 57, a. 3 [Leon. 11.531])
- NI of body downwards (if soul does not move it otherwise) (*In I De caelo*, lect. 3, n. 4 [Leon. 3.10])
- Nature of man’s members determined with relationship to an act, not a single position (in contrast to simple bodies as heavy and light, which have NI to one place) [implied NI] (*In I De caelo*, lect. 17, n. 5 [Leon. 69])

2. Man: Body: NI to Bodily Self-Preservation

- NI to things pertaining to the conservation of the bodily nature is not universally evil (*In IV Sent.*, d. 26, q. 1, a. 3 [Parma 7/2.919])
- NI of the old to seek the aid of external things (which results in covetousness if excessive) (*ST* II-II, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 9.456])
- Nature inclines us chiefly to the fear of dangers of death (*ST* II-II, q. 166, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.344])
- NI of bodily members to aid other members to preserve the unity of the body (e.g., man naturally opposes his hand for the protection of other members from punches) (*In I Cor.* [rep. vulg.], cap. 12, lect. 3, n. 751 [Marietti, 1.376])
- Nature inclines to the love of riches to the extent man’s life is preserved by them (*In IV Ethic.*, lect. 5, n. 2 [Leon. 47/2.215:23-25])


- Corruption of parts of the soul follows NI of natural bodily principles (*De ver.*, q. 25, a. 7 [Leon. 22/3.743:58-60])
- Man as inferior body has NI to receive influence of higher bodies (*SCG* II, cap. 30, n. 15 [Leon. 13.339])
- Reason resists NI of body (*SCG* III, cap. 85, n. 20 [Leon. 14.256])
- Inclinations from natural bodily dispositions are subject to reason (*ST* I, q. 83, a. 1, ad 5 [Leon. 5.308])
- NI of matter (by universal nature) is cause of corruption and defect (as distinct from NI of form by particular nature) (*ST* I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116])

H. Man: as Animal

1. Man: as Animal: NI of Soul to Body and of Body to Soul

- NI of soul to be united to body (*In II Sent.*, d. 32, q. 2, a. 3 expos. [Mand. 2.841])
• NI of body to soul (but no NI of body to soul where body is resolved into elements or converted to the flesh of another animal) (*In IV Sent.*, d. 43, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 3, s.c. 1 [Parma 7/2.1067])

• *NI of separated soul to have a body* (but no NI of separated body to soul) [implied NI] (*In IV Sent.*, d. 43, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 3, arg. 2 [Parma 7/2.1066])

• Every power of the soul is a nature and naturally inclines to something (*De ver.*, q. 25, a. 2, ad 8 [Leon. 22/3.734:240-42])

• NI of soul to be in union with body (*In IV Sent.*, d. 43, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 3, s.c. 2 [Parma 7/2.1067])

• NI of separated soul to be united with the body (*ST* I, q. 76, a. 1, ad 6 [Leon. 5.210])

• NI of soul to body (*Lect. super Matth.* [rep. Leod. Biss.], cap. 22, lect. 3)


• NI to those things that pertain to the preservation of the corporeal nature, e.g., NI to procreate children (*proles*), through which the specific nature is conserved (*In IV Sent.*, d. 26, q. 1, a. 3 [Parma 7/2.919])

• NI to preserve species by natural generation (*SCG* III, cap. 136, n. 14 [Leon. 14.413])

• NI of generic nature (which is the nature of man inasmuch as he is an animal) to desire things to preserve life of both species and individual (*ST* I-II, q. 46, a. 5 [Leon. 6.295-96])

• Inclination to something more special according to the nature man has in common with all animals: inclination to those things which nature teaches all animals, e.g., union of male and female, education of children (*liberi*), and similar things (*similia*) (*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170])

• Inclination of sensuality, which is ordered to the conservation of nature in the species and individual in other animals, becomes the fomes of sin outside the order of reason in man (*ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 6, ad 3 [Leon. 7.158])

• *NI to solicitude for necessities of life of the individual* (e.g., *food and raiment*) (*ST* I-II, q. 108 a. 3, arg. 5 [Leon. 7.286])

• Inclination of the nature common to man and other animals, e.g., to union of male and female, education of offspring (*natus*), and other things of this kind (*In V Ethic.*, lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:57-68])

3. Man: as Animal: NI of Sense Powers

• NI to acts accomplished by the apprehensive faculties (*ST* I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273-74])

• Inclination of power of sight to seeing [implied NI] (*ST* I, q. 78, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 5.251])


• Man’s sensitive nature inclines to desire those things which are delectible according to sense (*In II Sent.*, d. 28, q. 1, a. 1 [Mand. 2.718])
• Will of sensuality (voluntas sensualitatis) inclines naturally to what is enjoyable in the flesh (In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 2 [Mand. 2.993])
• Innate habit of inferior part of soul naturally inclines to evil (De ver., q. 16, a. 1, ad 11 [Leon. 22/2.506:357-60])
• Motion of intellective part of man’s nature is retarded or impeded by inclination of the sensitive part (ST I, q. 62, a. 6 [Leon. 5.116])
• NI of malice on the part of the sensitive nature of the individual to an inordinate passion (e.g., wrath or lust) (ST I-II, q. 63, a. 4, ad 2 [Leon. 5.129])
• Inclination of man’s sensitive nature is against the order of reason (ST I-II, q. 71, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 7.5])
• NI to set aside time for each necessary things, e.g., refreshment of body, sleep, etc. (ST II-II, q. 122, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 9.478])
• Nature inclines chiefly to seek pleasures of the flesh (ST II-II, q. 166, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.344])
• NI to evil in man because he is naturally irascible and concupiscent on account of his bodily complexion (De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:183-85])
• NI of man to something particularly fitting (conveniens) to his inferior nature (De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:230-38])
• NI to evil simply inasmuch as man has NI to that which is agreeable to carnal sense contrary to the good of reason (De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:236-38])
• NI to fury in sensible and bodily nature (which man shares with brutes) (De sub. sep., cap. 20 [Leon. 40.D77:85-88])
• On the part of the bodily nature, NI chiefly to seek pleasures of the flesh and NI to avoid the trouble of seeking knowledge (ST II-II, q. 166, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.344])

I. Man: as Rational

1. Man: as Rational: in General

• Reason’s NI to its end is a certain natural rectitude (In II Sent., d. 42, q. 2, a. 5 [Mand. 2.1084-85])
• Inclination of the nature of man insofar as he is man never contradicts the inclination of virtue, but is in conformity with it (In III Sent., d. 29, q. 1, a. 3 [Moos. 3.929])
• Natural reason inclines more to certain things (e.g., betrothal) than to other things (In IV Sent., d. 27, q. 2, a. 2 [Parma 7/2.932])
• Reason is naturally inclined to those things of which we have natural habits, e.g., to assent to primary principles (ST I, q. 83, a. 2 [Leon. 5.309])
• Inclination of intellectual nature is nothing other than what God gave the nature (ST I, q. 111, a. 2 [Leon. 5.516])
• NI to act according to reason (ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6 [Leon. 7.158])
• NI of rational creature to that which is consonant with eternal law and to do those things which are of the natural law (ST I-II, q. 93, a. 6 and ad 3 [Leon. 7.166-7])
• NI to good according to rational nature, which is proper to man (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170])
Among the things to which man is naturally inclined, it is proper to man to be inclined to act in accord with reason (e.g., to restore or not restore deposits according to circumstances) (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 4 [Leon. 7.171-72])

Inclination of man according to reason to will the good and flee evil is according to nature (In Rom., cap. 7, lect. 3, n. 567 [Marietti, 103])

NI of reason to discern the turpitudinous from the honorable (In V Ethic., lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:57-64])

2. Man: as Rational: Rational Powers

a. Man: as rational: rational powers: intellect

• Inclination of intellect to understand [implied NI] (De ver., q. 22, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 22/3.624:234-48])
• Intellect inclined to its act by natural appetite (De ver., q. 22, a. 12, ad 2 [Leon. 22/3.642:127-30])
• NI to assent to first principles (for which man has a natural habit) (ST I, q. 83 a. 2 [Leon. 5.309])
• NI to acts accomplished by the apprehensive faculties (ST I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273-74])
• By NI man is ordered to his connatural end according to reason or intellect insofar as it contains first principles naturally known (ST I-II, q. 62, a. 3 [Leon. 6.404])

b. Man: as rational: rational powers: will

i. Man: as rational: rational powers: will: in general

• NI by which man naturally wills the good is the order of nature to act (In II Sent., d. 39, q. 3, a. 1, ad 5 [Mand. 2.998])
• Will has a prior NI from another who is the cause of the willing (In III Sent., d. 27, q. 1, a. 2 [Moos 3.861])
• NI given to will by creator (De ver., q. 22, a. 9 [Leon. 22/3.632-33:59-124])
• NI of will as natural appetite or love according to its mode (ST I, q. 60, a. 1 [Leon. 5.99])
• NI in irrational things demonstrates NI in the will of intellectual nature (ST I, q. 60, a. 5 [Leon. 5.104])
• NI of will according to its mode (ST I, q. 87, a. 4 [Leon. 5.363])
• NI of will follows upon power (ST I, q. 106, a. 2 [Leon. 5.483-84])

ii. Man: as rational: rational powers: will: NI of the will to one thing

• NI to good is found in all men, but because the will is not necessarily determined to one thing, not all men will the good (In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1)
• NI of will to one thing (implied NI) (In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 2, ad 5
• Inclination of the will is naturally to one thing (De ver., q. 24, a. 10, ad 2 [Leon. 22/3.708:375-76])
• Will follows that NI in being determined to that one thing which is the last end to which nature inclines (De pot., q. 2, a. 3, ad 6 [Marietti 31])

iii. Man: as rational: rational powers: will: NI and freedom of the will

• Rectitude of choice of the will is from NI (In Sent., lib. 2, d. 39, q. 2, a. 2, ad 4)
• NI of will is not forced (De ver., q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.624:204-222])
• Common appetite of the will for beatitude proceeds from NI, not force (De ver., q. 22, a. 5, ad 6 [Marietti 31])
• Will’s being directed to something of necessity by NI is a strength, not a weakness (De ver., q. 22, a. 5, ad s.c. 2 [Leon. 22/3.626:343-49])
• Will is necessitated with respect to end (but not to means, object, act, or ordination to end) (De ver., q. 22, a. 6 [Leon. 22/3.627-28:68-138])
• NI of will to its object is determined by necessity (De ver., q. 22, a. 9 [Leon. 22/3.633:97-99])
• Necessity of NI is not repugnant to free will (De ver., q. 24, a. 1, ad 20 [Leon. 22/3.684:569-73])
• By NI free choice tends to the good (but does not have sufficient principle from within to complete it) (De ver., q. 24, a. 10, ad 1 [Leon. 22/3.707:339-45])
• Mode of intellectual nature is to be freely inclined towards its desired object (ST I, q. 62, a. 3, ad 2 [Leon. 5.112])

iv. Man: as rational: rational powers: will: NI of the will to goods and ends

• Inclination of will to good is in human nature, but is perfected by habit (In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2 [Mand. 2.992])
• NI by which man naturally wills the good (In II Sent., d. 39, q. 3, a. 1, ad 5 [Mand. 2.998])
• NI of will to the civil and natural good of man (In III Sent. d. 33, q. 2, a. 4, qc. 3 [Moos 3.1065])
• NI of will to the good according to virtue (In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 1, s.c. 1 [Mand. 2.991])
• Rational will, which is human nature, inclines to good consequent on natural apprehension of universal principles of right (ius) (whereas will of sensuality inclines naturally to what is enjoyable in the flesh) (In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 2 [Mand. 2.993])
• Sin is contrary to the NI of the will (In II Sent., d. 41, q. 2, a. 1, ad 5 [Mand. 2.1042])
• NI of will to the end presupposes natural cognition of the end (In III Sent., d. 33, q. 2, a. 4, qc. 4 [Moos 3.1065])
• NI to happiness according to common ratio (but not as a determinate good) (In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 3 [Parma 7/2.1193])
• NI of will to good (called “natural will” as distinct from “deliberate will”) (In IV Sent., d. 50, q. 2, a. 1, qc. 1 [Parma 7/2.1253])
• Will as nature has NI to happiness and to whatever is included in happiness (e.g., to be, knowledge of truth, and other such things) (De ver., q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.624:196-203])
• Common appetite of the will for beatitude proceeds from NI (De ver., q. 22, a. 5, ad 1 [Leon. 22/3.624.223-25])
• Will wills the good by necessity of NI (not by force proper to scientific knowledge) (De ver., q. 22, a. 5, ad 12 [Leon. 22/3.625:321-29])
• Will determined by NI to ultimate end (but not to means to that end except that determinate end is principle of means) (De ver., q. 22, a. 6, ad 1 [Leon. 22/3.627:73-82])
• NI of will to the good (in the blessed) (De ver., q. 24, a. 8, ad 1 [Leon. 22/3.700-144])
• NI of will to will and love its own perfection (SCG III, cap. 109, n. 7 [Leon. 14.341])
• NI of will ministers (obsequitur) to charity (ST I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2 [Leon. 4.22])
• NI of will to what is fitting according to nature (ST I, q. 59, a. 2 [Leon. 5.93])
• NI of will to what is fitting according to nature (ST I, q. 62, a. 2 [Leon. 5.111])
• Will inclined to good from the nature of its power (whence every sin is contrary to nature) (ST I-II, q. 78, a. 3 [Leon. 7.73-74])

3. Man: as Rational: Passions

• Certain passions of the soul are against the ratio of NI (e.g., despair’s flight from good on account of some difficulty and fear’s flight from repelling a contrary evil) (ST I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.274])
• Inclination to anger (more than to desire) [implied NI] (ST I-II, q. 46, a. 5 [Leon. 6.295-96])
• NI of individual man to a passion (e.g., bashfulness or magnanity) [material sense] (In IV Ethic., lect. 10, n. 24 [Leon. 47/2.236:253-55])
4. Man: as Rational: Habits in General

- Men are naturally inclined to those things of which they have natural habits (e.g., to assent to first principles) (ST I, q. 83, a. 2 [Leon. 5.309])

5. Man: as Rational: Virtue

a. Man: as rational: virtue: NI of man (as species) to virtue

i. NI to virtue in general

- NI of man insofar as he is man never contradicts the inclination of virtue, but is in conformity with it (In III Sent., d. 29, q. 1, a. 3 [Moos 3.929])
- NI to works of virtue (In III Sent., d. 37, q. 1, a. 1 [Moos 3.1235])
- Motion of virtue not consequent on NI (In IV Sent., d. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 4, ad 3 [Moos 4.606])
- NI lacks character of perfect virtue, absent prudence (ST I-II, q. 65, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 6.419])
- NI to virtue due to rational nature (ST I-II, q. 85, a. 2 [Leon. 7.111])
- NI to have virtues (as consonant with eternal law) (ST I-II, q. 93, a. 6 [Leon. 7.166-7])
- NI according to proper form as rational soul is to act according to reason, which is to act according to virtue (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.171])
- Many things are done according to virtue to which nature does not at first incline (I-II, q. 94 a. 3)
- Natural reason inclines us to the acts of the moral virtues (ST II-II, q. 22, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 8.160])
- Virtues allow us to follow our NIs in due manner; to every determinate NI corresponds a special virtue or power, e.g., vengeance corresponds to special inclination of nature to remove harm (through irascible power) [also in beginnings of virtue] (ST II-II, q. 108, a. 2 [Leon. 9.411])
- NI to accomplish action commensurate with power; vices are imbalance on either end (e.g., presumption is excess, while pusillanimity is defect) (ST II-II, q. 133, a. 1 [Leon. 10.86])
- Temperance is in accord with the inclination of human nature (ST II-II, q. 141, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 10.122])
- Inclination and inchoation to virtues is natural (e.g., inclination to natural justice, chastity, humility, etc.), but not the perfection of virtues (Lect. super Matth. [rep. Petri de Andria], cap. 4, lect. 3)
- NI of the will is to the good of virtue (De malo, q. 1, a. 4 [Leon. 23.20:166-67])
- Moral virtue means a certain inclination towards some appetible, which inclination is from nature and inclines toward that which is convenient to itself (In II Ethic., lect. 1, n. 3 [Leon. 47/1.77:56-61])
• When it is often moved by its object, the appetite follows a certain inclination in accordance with the mode of nature, as many drops of water falling on a rock hollow it out (*In II Ethic.*, lect. 1, n. 5 [Leon. 47/1.77:103-5])

• From the part of reason and will, all men are naturally inclined to works of virtue (*In VI Ethic.*, lect. 11, nn. 2-3 [Leon. 47/2.375-76:29-73])

• NI to happiness through virtues (*De virt. comm.*, a. 12, ad 6 [Marietti 745])

• Man is the best animal if perfected in virtue, to which he has a NI (*In I Polit.*, lect. 1, n. 33 [Leon. 48.A79:209-11])

• A certain NI to virtue is in us from nature (*In I Polit.*, lect. 11, n. 3 [Leon. 48.A118:49-52])

• Inclination to virtue [implied NI] (*In I Polit.*, lect. 11, n. 4 [Leon. 48.A118:56-58])

• Certain NIs are the beginnings of the virtues, brought to due completion through practice (*De ver.*, q. 11, a. 1 [Leon. 22/2.350:259-64])

• NI to good of virtue is a beginning of virtue in man (*ST* I-II, q. 58, a. 4, ad 3 [Leon. 6.375-76])

• NI to virtue must be further determined and perfected by reason (*De virt. comm.*, a. 6 [Marietti 722])

ii. NI as beginning of virtue

• NI to virtue is diminished by actual sin (*ST* I-II, q. 85, a. 3 [Leon. 7.113])

• NI to virtue is depraved by vicious habit (*ST* I-II, q. 93, a. 6 [Leon. 7.167])

• NI to virtue (remains in the damned) as the aptitude for sight remains in the root of the blind man’s nature (*ST* I-II, q. 85, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 7.112])

b. Man: man as rational: virtue: NI of man as species to particular virtues

• NI to studiousness (on the part of the soul) (*ST* II-II, q. 166, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.344])

• Man, by natural reason, is inclined to justice (*ST* II-II, q. 183, a. 4 [Leon. 10.449])

• Affirmative and negative precepts of law perfect the NI of appetite, of which NI there are two objects (good and evil) (*In Ps.*, 36, n. 19)

c. Man: man as rational: virtue: NI of individual men to particular virtues

• NI to virtuous acts is imperfect virtue (*In III Sent.*, d. 36, q. 1, a. 1 [Moos 3.1215-17])

• NI of individual to particular virtues from natural complexion (e.g., liberality) [material sense] (*In III Sent.*, d. 36, q. 1, a. 1 [Moos 3.1215-17])

• NI to acts of prudence call natural virtue (*In III Sent.*, d. 36, q. 1, a. 1 [Moos 3.1215-17])

• NI to those things which are of virtue is more harmful the stronger they are without application of the discretion of reason (*In III Sent.*, d. 36, q. 1, a. 1 [Moos 3.1215-17])

• Diverse men have NI to diverse virtues (e.g., NI from birth of individual to mercy) [material sense] (*In Iob*, cap. 31 [Leon. 26.167:211-17])

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• NI is not sufficient to achieve the mean of moral virtue (therefore prudence is needed) (ST II-II, q. 47 a. 7 ad 3 [Leon. 8.355])
• NI of individual man to fortitude by reason of natural temperament [material sense] (ST II-II, q. 123, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 10.4])
• A certain NI to act of mercy as a virtue [material sense] (ST III, q. 27, a. 6, ad 3 [Leon. 11.299])
• NI to acts of certain virtues without prudence (e.g., natural fortitude) [material sense] (Quodlibet XII, q. 14, a. un. [Leon. 25/2.417:69-75])
• Natural disposition by which certain men are inclined to virtuous works (e.g., works of justice, temperance, bravery) [material sense] (In VI Ethic., lect. 11, nn. 2-5 [Leon. 47/2.375:76:22-72])
• NI of an individual man to one virtue or another, e.g., to liberality or temperance [material sense] (In VI Ethic., lect. 11, n. 12 [Leon. 47/2.598:100-2])
• From natural complexion, inclination of individual man to virtue [material sense] (De virt. comm., a. 8 [Marietti 728-29])
• NI with respect to the object of one virtue but not with respect to all virtues, because the natural disposition inclining to one virtue inclines to the opposite of another virtue (e.g., one who is naturally more disposed to courage is less disposed to patience) [implied NI; material sense] (De virt. comm., a. 8, ad 10 [Marietti 728-29])
• NI of individual nature from birth to courage and temperance (De virt. comm., a. 8, ad 19 [Marietti 729])
• NI to virtue according to the disposition that is in the sensitive part (De virt. comm., a. 9, ad 22 [Marietti 733])
• NI to certain works of virtue from birth (e.g., mercy) (De virt. card., a. 2 [Marietti 819])
• Inclination from nature of an individual to one virtue rather than another (De virt. card., a. 2, ad 1 [Marietti 819])
• Unequal inclination of nature to different virtues in same person (De virt. card., a. 3 [Marietti 824])

d. Man: man as rational: virtue: theological virtues as perfective of NI

• Charity perfects NI (De carit., a. 8, arg. 7 and ad 7 [Marietti 773-75])

6. Man: as Rational: Ends

a. Man: as rational: ends: NI to good in general

• Rational inclination to desire the per se desirable and honest [implied NI] (In II Sent. d. 28 q. 1 a. 1 [Mand. 2.718])
• NI to will the good according to virtue (In II Sent. d. 39 q. 2 a. 1 s.c. 1 [Mand. 2.991])
• Inclination to good natural to man according to the spark of reason (In II Sent. d. 39 q. 3 a. 1 s.c. 2 [Mand. 2.996])

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• NI to be good \((In \ IV \ Sent., \ d. \ 36, \ q. \ 1, \ a. \ 1, \ ad \ 2 \ [Parma \ 7/2.995])\)
• Synderesis by natural habit always inclines to good \((De \ ver., \ q. \ 16, \ a. \ 1, \ ad \ 7 \ [Leon. \ 22/2.505:317-18])\)
• Habit of higher part of soul naturally inclines to good \((De \ ver., \ q. \ 16, \ a. \ 1, \ ad \ 11 \ [Leon. \ 22/2.506:360-63])\)
• Act of the natural habit of synderesis is to incline to good \((De \ ver., \ q. \ 16, \ a. \ 1, \ ad \ 12 \ [Leon. \ 22/2.507:366-68])\)
• Inclination to pursue good (and avoid evil) \((ST \ I-II, \ q. \ 41, \ a. \ 3 \ [Leon. \ 6.273-74])\)
• NI to good according to nature proper to man, including NI to know the truth about God, to live in society, to avoid ignorance, to not offend others, and “other things of this kind” \((ST \ I-II, \ q. \ 94, \ a. \ 2 \ [Leon. \ 7.170])\)
• Nature inclines to hope for the good proportionate to human nature \((ST \ II-II, \ q. \ 22, \ a. \ 1, \ ad \ 1 \ [Leon. \ 8.160])\)
• Natural good inclines to a suitable good even in the wicked \((In \ X \ Ethic., \ lect. \ 2, \ n. \ 14 \ [Leon. \ 47/2.556-57:154-67])\)
• NI to good in man is not determinate \((De \ virt. \ comm., \ a. \ 6 \ [Marietti \ 722])\)
• NI of the will to the good proportioned to its nature (NI of will insufficient to supernatural good) \((De \ virt. \ comm., \ a. \ 10 \ [Marietti \ 735-36])\)

b. Man: as rational: ends: NI to happiness generally

• NI to the end of happiness as proposed by the philosophers \((In \ III \ Sent., \ d. \ 23, \ q. \ 1, \ a. \ 4, \ qc. \ 3, \ ad \ 2 \ [Moos \ 3.715])\)
• NI to happiness according to a common ratio (but not to a determinate good) \((In \ IV \ Sent., \ d. \ 49, \ q. \ 1, \ a. \ 3, \ qc. \ 3 \ [Parma \ 7/2.1193])\)
• NI (of will) to happiness and whatever is included in happiness: to be, knowledge of truth, etc. \((De \ ver., \ q. \ 22, \ a. \ 5 \ [Leon. \ 22/3.624:196-203])\)
• Common appetite for happiness comes from NI (not from force) \((De \ ver., \ q. \ 22, \ a. \ 5, \ ad \ 1 \ [Leon. \ 22/3.624:223-25])\)
• NI to happiness (through virtues); NI suffices for end proportionate to human nature [also in virtue] \((De \ virt. \ comm., \ a. \ 12, \ ad \ 6 \ [Marietti \ 745])\)

c. Man: as rational: ends: NI to ultimate end

• NI to connatural end \((In \ III \ Sent., \ d. \ 23, \ q. \ 1, \ a. \ 4, \ qc. \ 3 \ [Moos \ 3.715])\)
• NI to the end of happiness as proposed by the philosophers \((In \ III \ Sent., \ d. \ 23, \ q. \ 1, \ a. \ 4 \ qc. \ 3 \ ad \ 2 \ [Moos \ 3.715])\)
• NI to ultimate end proportionate to nature \((In \ III \ Sent., \ d. \ 23, \ q. \ 1, \ a. \ 4, \ qc. \ 3, \ ad \ 3 \ [Moos \ 3.715])\)
• As fire by natural inclination has an absolute certitude of heating, so hope is said to hope by the certitude of natural inclination \((In \ III \ Sent., \ d. \ 26, \ q. \ 2, \ a. \ 4, \ ad \ 2 \ [Moos \ 3.842])\)
• To reach ultimate end, need theological virtue of charity in addition to NI \((In \ III \ Sent., \ d. \ 27, \ q. \ 2, \ a. \ 3, \ ad \ 5 \ [Moos \ 3.882])\)
• NI to ultimate end, but not to means to that end (*De ver.*, q. 22, a. 6 [Leon. 22/3.627:70-82])
• NI of man to ultimate end, yet supernatural end is attainable only by grace (*In De Trin.* III, q. 6, a. 4, ad 5 [Leon. 50:171:189-96])
• NI by which will cannot not will ultimate end (*De pot.*, q. 2, a. 3 [Marietti 31])
• Sin removes the inclination or habilitude of nature to grace (*Quaes. disp. de an.*, q. 14, ad 17 [Leon. 24/1.129:363-68])
• Common course and inclination of human nature falls short of eternal happiness (*ST* I, q. 23, a. 7, ad 3 [Leon. 4.283])
• NI to human last end (*ST* I, q. 82 a. 1 [Leon. 5.293])
• Through NI man is ordered to his connatural end (analogous to direction by theological virtues to supernatural beatitude) (*ST* I-II, q. 62, a. 3 [Leon. 6.403])

d. Man: as rational: ends: contemplation of truth

• NI to know the truth about God (*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170])
• Man’s intellect, by a sort of NI, tends toward truth (*In I Phys.*, lect. 10 n. 5 [Leon. 2.34])
• Nature inclines everyone to the same pleasure as the highest (*In VII Ethic.*, lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:160-61])
• NI to the contemplation of rational truth inasmuch as all men naturally desire to know (*In VII Ethic.*, lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:164-67])
• NI of the minds of men to truth (*In I De caelo*, lect. 7, n. 7 [Leon. 3.30])

e. Man: as rational: ends: knowledge

• We seek knowledge (*scientia*) by the necessity of natural inclination (*De ver.*, q. 22, a. 5, ad 12 [Leon. 22/3.625:321-29])
• Intellect inclined to its act by natural appetite (*De ver.*, q. 22, a. 12, ad 2 [Leon. 22/3.642:127-30])
• NI to assent to first principles (for which have a natural habits) (*ST* I, q. 83, a. 2 [Leon. 5.309])
• NI to know the future by human means (not by undue means, e.g., by divination) (*ST* II-II, q. 95, a. 1, arg. 3, co. and ad 3 [Leon. 9.311-12])
• Man is naturally inclined to his proper operation, which is to understand, and therefore to possess scientific knowledge (*In I Meta.*, lect. 1, n. 3 [Marietti 6])

f. Man: as rational: ends: due act and end

• NI to due act act and end by participation in eternal law (*ST* I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154])

11 These texts address only the natural inclination to knowledge, not knowledge by or through inclination. Cf., e.g., *Sent. De sensu*, tract. 2 lect. 1, n. 8 (regarding a certain knowledge of future things by observing natural inclinations, as distinct from divination).
• NI in respect to right ends of human life, which are fixed (ST II-II, q. 47 a. 15 [Leon. 8.363])

g. Man: as rational: ends: social and political

i. Man: as rational: ends: love of others

• NI to love of all men (De carit., a. 8, arg. 7 and ad 7 [Marietti 773-75])¹²

ii. Man: as rational: ends: NI to speech

• NI to a general way of speaking (In I De caelo, lect. 2 n. 6 [Leon. 3.7])
• NI to use the term “all” only in reference to at least three things (known because it is generally observed that all speak this way) (In I De caelo, lect. 2 n. 6 [Leon. 3.7])

iii. Man: as rational: ends: NI to marriage

• NI of reason to marriage is natural as mediated by free choice, not as resulting from the necessity of the principles of nature (In IV Sent. d. 26, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1, and ad 2 [Parma 7/2.918])
• NI to marriage (In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 2 [Parma 7/2.919])
• Because, in matters to which nature inclines, reason does not need to be well developed in order to deliberate, it is possible to consent to marriage before one is able to manage one’s own affairs in other matters without a guardian (In IV Sent. d. 36, q. 1, a. 5, ad 1 [Parma 7/2.997])

iv. Man: as rational: ends: NIs towards one’s family

• A son is more naturally inclined to love his father than a father is to love his son (In III Sent. d. 29, q. 1, a. 7 [Moos 3.941-42])
• NI of father to love son and NI of son to subject himself to his father (In III Sent. d. 29, q. 1, a. 7, ad 1 [Moos 3.941-42])
• NI to honor one’s parents¹³ (In III Sent. d. 37 q. 1, a. 2, qc. 1, ad 5 [Moos 3.1239])
• NI to love relatives more than others (i.e., the more nature inclines one to love another, the more unfitting it is to harm the other) (In II Polit., lect. 3, n. 1 [Leon. 48.A127:20-23])

v. NI to social and political life

• NI to civil and natural good of man (In III Sent., d. 33, q. 2, a. 4, qc. 3 [Moos 3.1065])
• NI to political society (In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 1 [Parma 7/2.918])

¹² Cf. ST I-I, q. 100, a. 3, ad 1 (the commandments to love God and neighbor are primary and common precepts of natural law).
¹³ The context of this text is a discussion of the fourth commandment (regarding giving honor to one’s parents), which is first of the second table of the commandments.
• NI to live in society (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170])
• NI to iustum naturale (In V Ethic., lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:57-59])
• NI to act in accord with the ius gentium (e.g., to observe pacts, honor legates etc.) (In V Ethic., lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:68-73])

vi. NI to political common good

• NI to what is necessary for the perfection of one (which natural perfections are common to all) distinct from NI to what is necessary for the perfection of the multitude (e.g., agriculture et construction) (In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 2 [Parma 7/2.919])
• NI of common human nature to various offices and acts such as husbandry, married life, contemplative life (In IV Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 2, ad 4 [Parma 7/2.919])
• NI of virtuous citizen to expose himself to mortal danger for the preservation of the whole republic (ST I, q. 60, a. 5 [Leon. 5.104])
• NI of man to repress those who rise up against him (ST I-II, q. 87, a. 1 [Leon. 7.121])
• NI of man to suffer damage to his own property and person for sake of the common good (ST II-II, q. 26 a. 3 [Leon. 8.211])
• NI of the good citizen to expose himself to mortal danger for the common good (Quod. I, q. 4, a. 3 [Leon. 25/2.188:73-75])

h. Man: as rational: ends: NIs to love and worship God

• Natural reason inclines man to confess his sins in the proper place, to the right person, and in the right manner (In IV Sent., d. 17, q. 3, a. 2, qc. 2, ad 1 [Moos 4.897])
• NI of man to show honor and subjection to his superior (i.e., to God) according to his mode, including to offer sacrifice to God using sensible signs (ST II-II, q. 85, a. 1 [Leon. 9.215])
• NI to take rest, keep sabbath, honor God, and take spiritual refreshment (based upon NI inclination to set aside time for each necessary things, e.g., refreshment of body, sleep, etc.) (ST II-II, q. 122, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 9.478])
• NI to love God more than self (Quod. I, q. 4, a. 3 [Leon. 25/2.188:58-82])

i. Man: as rational: ends: pleasure in accord with reason

• Nature inclines man to whatever is becoming to man, i.e., pleasures that are not contrary to reason (e.g., pleasures that are in accord with temperance) (ST II-II, q. 141, a. 1, arg. 1 and ad 1 [Leon. 10.122])
• Nature inclines to pleasures that are desirable by nature (In VII Ethic., lect. 4, n. 11 [Leon. 47/2.397:145-49])

j. Man: as rational: ends: second intentions of nature

• NI of reason to goods contrary to the first intention of nature (e.g., to have the sinner punished by slavery) (In IV Sent., d. 36, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2 [Parma 7/2.995])
• NI to meekness (when he has not suffered injury), but also NI to inflict punishment (after suffering injury) (*In IV Ethic.*, lect. 13, n. 13 [Leon. 47/2.244:183-86])
• NI to act in accord with the *ius gentium*, e.g., to observe pacts, honor legates etc. (*In V Ethic.*, lect. 12, n. 4 [Leon. 47/2.305:68-73])

*k. Man: as rational: ends: miscellaneous*

• There may be in man some NI that he would dig a grave, since this is some one thing, and similarly that he would find a treasure (but not that he would find a treasure while digging a grave) (*De sort.*, cap. 4 [Leon. 43.234:185-90])

7. *Man: as Rational: NI to Avoid Things That Are Contrary to Good*

• NI (implied) to rise up against contrary and hurtful things (*ST* I-II, q. 46, a. 5 [Leon. 6.295-96])
• NI of man to repress those who rise up against him (*ST* I-II, q. 87, a. 1 [Leon. 7.121])
• NI to avoid evil (*ST* I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273-74])
• NI to avoid ignorance (*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170])
• NI not to offend others (*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170])
• Nature inclines that one not do harm to another (*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 7.173])
• Nature inclines us chiefly to the fear of dangers of death (*ST* II-II, q. 166, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.344])

8. *Man: as Rational: Reason vs. Lower Appetites*

• Man’s intellectual nature inclines to desire the per se desirable and honorable (*honesta*); man’s sensitive nature inclines to desire those things that are delectible according to sense (*In II Sent.*, d. 28, q. 1, a. 1 [Mand. 2.718])
• Will of sensuality inclines naturally to what is enjoyable in the flesh (*In II Sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 2 [Mand. 2.993])
• NI of man insofar as he is man (*In III Sent.*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 3 [Moos 3.929])
• Habit of higher part of soul naturally inclines to good (*De ver.*, q. 16, a. 1, ad 11 [Leon. 22/2.506:360-62])
• Reason resists NI of body (*SCG* III, cap 85, n. 20 [Leon. 14.256])
• Motion of intellective part of man’s nature retarded or impeded by inclination of sensitive part (*ST* I, q. 62, a. 6 [Leon. 5.116])
• NI to evil on account of sensitive nature, not from intellectual nature (*ST* I, q. 63, a. 4, ad 2 [Leon. 5.129])
• Inclinations from natural bodily dispositions are subject to reason (*ST* I, q. 83, a. 1, ad 5 [Leon. 5.308])
• The stronger the natural inclination to virtue is, the more perilous it may prove to be, unless accompanied by right reason, which rectifies the choice of fitting means to the due end (*ST* I-II, q. 58, a. 4, ad 3)
• Inclination of sensuality become fomes of sin if outside the order of reason (ST I-II, q. 91, a. 6, ad 3 [Leon. 7.158])
• All inclinations of whatever parts of human nature (including concupiscible and irascibilis), in so far as ruled by reason, are under natural law (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2, ad 2 [Leon. 7.170])
• Order of reason overrides NI to resist corruption because reason given to man that he may pursue those thing to which nature inclines, not in all cases but according to the order of reason (ST II-II, q. 69, a. 4, arg. 1 and ad 1 [Leon. 9.113])
• NIs are to be regulated according to reason, which is the governing power in human nature (ST II-II, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 9.456])
• Inclination of human nature vs. inclination of bestial nature; nature inclines man to whatever is becoming to man (e.g., pleasures that are not contrary to reason, such as pleasures that are in accord with temperance) (ST II-II, q. 141, a. 1, arg. 1 and ad 1 [Leon. 10.122])
• NI of bodily nature to seek pleasures of the flesh vs. NI of soul to seek knowledge (ST II-II, q. 166, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.344])
• NI of man to evil simply, i.e., to that which is agreeable to carnal sense contrary to the good of reason [material sense] (De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:236-38])

J. Man: NIs to Evil, Sin, and Vice

1. Man: NI to Evil (ad malum): in General

• Virtue’s chief purpose is to restrain man’s NI toward evil (In IV Ethic., lect. 11, n. 7 [Leon. 47/2.238:87-88])
• Innate habit which inclines to evil belongs to the lower part of the soul (De ver., q. 16, a. 1, ad 11 [Leon. 22/2.506:357-60])
• Something has NI to evil insofar as the evil is joined to a good (ST I, q. 63, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 5.129])
• Something is naturally evil if it has NI to evil, as some men are naturally angered or concupiscent on account of their bodily complexion (De malo, q. 16, a. 2, c., arg. 18, and ad 18 [Leon. 23.287-91:150-519])
• There is in man, according to his sensible and corporeal nature which he shares with brutes, a certain inclination to raging which is evil for man (De sub. sep., cap. 20 [Leon. 40.D77:85-88])

2. Man: NI to Sin (peccatum)

• A multitude of men for the most part follows its NIs (e.g., to become angry) because as members of a group, men give in to their passions as the celestial body inclines them [material sense] (De ver., q. 5, a. 10, ad 7 [Leon. 22/1.171:241-53])
• Man resists his NI through reason (SCG III, cap 85, n. 20 [Leon. 14.256])
• NI to malice on the part of the sensitive nature of the individual to an inordinate passion (e.g., wrath or lust) [material sense] (ST I, q. 63, a. 4, ad 2 [Leon. 5.129])
• Sin follows on inclinations of sensitive nature (ST I-II, q. 71, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 7.5])
• NI to sin and evil due to corrupt disposition of the body (ST I-II, q. 78, a. 3 [Leon. 7.73-74])
• Inclination of corrupt nature to corruptible goods (ST I-II, q. 84, a. 1 [Leon. 7.105])
• NI of individual men to particular actions and passions that exceed the mean of virtue (signified by his taking pleasure in such action or passion) [material sense] (In II Ethic., lect. 11, n. 7 [Leon. 47/1.115:84-91])
• Men vehemently tend toward those things to which they have a NI and thus easily exceed the mean, which leads to sin [material sense] (In II Ethic., lect. 11, n. 7 [Leon. 47/1.115:84-91])

3. Man: NI to Vice

• Because man’s bodily nature nature inclines him chiefly to seek pleasures of the flesh, he is inclined to avoid the trouble of seeking knowledge (ST II-II, q. 166, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.344])
• Vice follows on inclinations of sensitive nature (ST I-II, q. 71, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 7.5])
• NI of the old to covetousness (ST II-II, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3 [Leon. 9.456])
• Nature inclines man to daring (audacia) (except insofar as such inclination is hindered by fear of harm) (ST II-II, q. 127, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 10.50])
• Those vices that naturally tend to increase in us because we are by nature inclined to them are more opposed to virtue; the aim of virtue is to curb more effectively those vices to which we have a stronger inclination (In II Ethic., lect. 10, n. 11 [Leon. 47/1.112:154-55])
• All men are naturally inclined to pleasure (therefore one who aims at virtue should guard against such pleasures) (In II Ethic., lect. 11, n. 9 [Leon. 47/1.115:110-15])
• NI of an individual to illiberality [material sense] (In IV Ethic., lect. 5, n. 2 [Leon. 47/2.215:17-20])
• Stronger inclination of human nature towards vice than towards virtue (whose chief purpose is to restrain man’s inclination toward evil) (In IV Ethic., lect. 11, n. 7 [Leon. 47/2.238:85-88])
• Injustice by its very nature has an inclination to evil (In VII Ethic., lect. 6, n. 19 [Leon. 47/2.407:236-38])
• NI to vice according to the disposition in the sensitive part (De virt. comm., a. 9, ad 22 [Marietti 733])

K. Man: by Distinction of the Sexes (distinctio sexuum)

I. Man: by Distinction of the Sexes: Both Male and Female (mas et femina)

• Because NI in the appetitive follows natural conception in cognition since it is not so much opposed to the natural concept for a man to have several wives as for a wife to have

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14 Here natura means any intelligible thing. See In II Sent. d. 37, q. 1, a. 1.
15 See ST I, q. 98 a. 2 [Leon. 5.438].
several husbands, men are more jealous than women (In IV Sent., d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 9 [Parma 7/2.968])
- NI to union of male and female according to the inclination of the nature man has in common with all animals (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170])

2. Man: by Distinction of the Sexes: Male
- Son is more naturally inclined to love the father than the father to love the son (In III Sent. d. 29, q. 1, a. 7 [Moos 3.941-42])
- NI of father to love son; NI of son to subject himself to his father as between father and son (In III Sent., d. 29, q. 1, a. 7, ad 1 [Moos 3.942])

3. Man: by Distinction of the Sexes: Female
- NI of woman to conceive a son (although she lacks a sufficient principle from which this happens of necessity) (De ver., q. 24, a. 10, ad 1 [Leon. 22/3.707:339-45])
- NI of woman to have long hair and take care of her hair (In I Cor. [rep. vulg.], cap. 11 lect. 2, nn. 598-99 [Marietti, 1.346-47])
- NI of woman to take care of her hair (In I Cor. [rep. vulg.], cap. 11, lect. 3, n. 619 [Marietti, 1.350])
- NI of woman to take care of her hair (i.e., by covering her head) (In I Cor. [rep. reg.], cap. 11, vs. 5)
- NI of woman to take care of her hair (i.e., by covering her head) (In I Cor. [rep. reg.], cap. 11, vs. 14)

L. Man: by Distinction of Slave and Free
- Nature has an inclination to make the bodies of free men and slaves different (but despite this inclination, nature sometimes falls short, giving the body of a slave to a free man or vice versa) (In I Polit., lect. 3, n. 15 [Leon. 48.A88:267-70])
- Nature is inclined to make the bodies of slaves and frees men different (In I Polit., lect. 3, n. 17 [Leon. 48.A88:285-86])

M. Man: Things That Are Not Against NI
- Many things are done according to virtue to which nature does not at first incline, but through reason are found to be useful to living well (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.171])
- Some things that are of natural ius are things to which we do not have NIs, but are not against nature (e.g., clothing, private property, and slavery) (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 7.173])
- Love of enemy (as enemy) (De carit., a. 8, arg. 7 and ad 7 [Marietti 773-75])
- To love of enemy insofar as he is the enemy is against NI [implied NI] (De carit., a. 8, arg. 13 and ad. 13 [Marietti 773-75])
N. Man: Things That Are Against NI

- Certain passions of the soul are against the ratio of NI (e.g., despair’s flight from good on account of some difficulty and fear’s flight from repelling a contrary evil) (ST I-II, q. 41, a. 3 [Leon. 6.273-74])
- Suicide is against NI of each thing to preserve itself in being and resist corruptions insofar as it can (ST II-II, q. 64, a. 5 [Leon. 9.71])
- Everything against NI is sin (ST I-II, q. 133, a. 1 [Leon. 10.86])
- Sin is against man’s reason, which is naturally inclined to justice (ST II-II, q. 183, a. 4 [Leon. 10.449])
- Punishment is against NI (De malo, q. 5, a. 3, ad 3 [Leon. 23.136:113-20])
- It is impossible for a NI to be perverse (Quod. I, q. 4, a. 3 [Leon. 25/2.188:53-54])
- Some pleasures are against NI (while other pleasures are “in between” if desired to excess, e.g., pleasures of money and gain, victory and honor) (In VII Ethic., lect. 4, n. 11 [Leon. 47/2.397:144-58])

O. Man: Things To Which There Is No NI

- Motion of vice is not consequent on NI (In IV Sent., d. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 4, ad 3 [Moos 4.606])
- No NI to make religious vows (in contrast to marriage, to which nature does incline) (In IV Sent. d. 36, q. 1, a. 5, ad 1 [Parma 7/2.997])
- Religious vow is about matters outside those things to which nature inclines (In IV Sent. d. 36, q. 1, a. 5, ad 2 [Parma 7/2.995])
- No NI in the ashes of a man’s dead body to resurrection (In IV Sent. d. 43, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 3, arg. 1, s.c. 1, and co. [Parma 7/2.1066-67])
- No NI to pleasure as such, because the end of a natural inclination is the attainment of a good, not the resting of the inclination (SCG III, cap. 26, n. 15 [Leon. 14.72])
- No NI to evil because intellectual nature is ordered to universal good (ST I, q. 63, a. 4 [Leon. 5.129])
- No NI to find a treasure while digging a grave (De sort., cap. 4 [Leon. 43.234:185-90])
- Nature inclines neither to evil nor falsehood (In VII Ethic., lect. 13, n. 12 [Leon. 47/2.432:136-37])

P. Man: Quasi-NI

- Quasi-NI of the rational mind to sin (De ver., q. 24, a. 10, ad 5 [Leon. 22/3.708:399-402])
- Custom (mos) as NI or quasi-natural inclination (ST I-II, q. 58, a. 1 [Leon. 6.372])
- Will of itself proceeds to the act of sin as it were already totally inclined from habit after the manner of a natural inclination to the act of sin (De malo, q. 3, a. 13 [Leon. 23.94:68-72])
Q. Man: NI Distinguished From Supervenient Inclination

- NIs are the principles of all supervenient inclinations (ST II-II, q. 155, a. 2 [Leon. 10.254])
- NI following upon supervenient form (e.g., to whatever is appropriate according to an acquired habit) (In De hebdom., lect. 2 [Leon. 50.274:299-309])

R. Man: NI in the Damned

- NI to will the good, even in the damned (In II Sent., d. 39, q. 3, a. 1, ad 5 [Mand. 2.998])
- In the damned, the natural inclination of the will to the good, called natural will, is from the author of nature (In IV Sent., d. 50, q. 2, a. 1, qc. 1, ad 1 [Parma 7/2.1252])
- NI of the damned to good because inclination to good results from nature; thus, so long as nature remains, the inclination to good cannot be taken away, even from the damned (De ver., q. 16, a. 3, ad 5 [Leon. 22/2.511:103-08])
- NI to virtue remains in the damned (ST I-II, q. 85, a. 2, ad 3 [Leon. 7.112])

IV. ANGELS

- Inclination of immaterial things (i.e., angels) to last forever [implied NI] (De pot., q. 5, a. 4 [Marietti 139])
- NI of will in angel as intellectual nature (ST I, q. 60, a. 1 [Leon. 5.98])
- Angel moved by God to act insofar as it has NI (which being moved is compatible with free will) (ST I, q. 60, a. 1, ad 2 [Leon. 5.98])
- Sin is against NI of angels (ST I, q. 63, a. 9 [Leon. 5.138])
- NI of angel to love God more than itself (Quod. I, q. 4, a. 3 [Leon. 25/2.188:58-66])

V. DEMONS

- Appetite of demons to desire the good and the best is by NI (De ver., q. 24, a. 10, ad 17 [Leon. 22/3.709:490-94])
- As intellectual natures each of which is ordered to universal good, demons cannot have NI to evil (ST I, q. 63, a. 4 [Leon. 5.129])
- As intellectual natures (lacking sensitive nature), demons have no NI to evil (ST I, q. 63, a. 4, ad 1 [Leon. 5.129])
- No NI to evil in itself (De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.287-89:170-306])
- Even if demons were corporeal they could not have a NI to evil (De malo, q. 16, a. 2, arg. 18 and ad 18 [Leon. 23.287-91:150-519])
- As intellectual nature, demons have no NI to evil (De sub. sep., cap. 20 [Leon. 40.D77:76-109])
VI. COMMON NATURAL INCLINATIONS. These texts pertain to the natural inclinations of created beings or natures generally, regardless of grade.

A. Common: Nature in General

- NI according to exigency of nature inclining (In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 2, ad 5 [Mand. 2.993])
- Nature always inclines to that which is always and per se, not to what happens by chance (In III Sent. d. 29, q. 1, a. 7, ad 1 [Moos 3.942])
- Whatever is natural in a thing is inclined to good (In IV Sent., d. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 4, ad 3 [Moos 4.606])
- Common to every nature to have NI, which is natural appetite or love (ST I, q. 60, a. 1 [Leon. 5.98])
- NI of each thing to naturally love itself and preserve itself in being and resist corruptions insofar as it can (ST II-II, q. 64, a. 5 [Leon. 9.113])
- Nature inclines to whatever is becoming to it (ST II-II, q. 141, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 10.122])
- All things have in themselves an NI, which is something divine and the principle of which is form (In VII Ethic., lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:164-69])

B. Common: NI of Matter to Form

- In those things which are born to receive, as is prime matter, only NI to form is sufficient to take away violence (In IV Sent. d. 17, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 2 [Moos 4.840])
- Inclination of prime matter to form [Implied NI] (In De div. nom., cap. 4, lect. 2, n. 298 [Marietti 97])
- Inclination of prime matter to the good [Implied NI] (In De div. nom., cap. 4, lect. 13, n. 463 [Marietti 161])
- Inclination of matter to being (not from something superadded to essence, but from matter) [Implied NI] (ST I, q. 59, a. 2 [Leon. 5.93])
- NI of matter (by universal nature) as cause of corruption and defect distinguished from NI of form (by particular nature) (ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116])

C. Common: Form

- NI of any thing to operation convenient to itself according to form (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.171])
- NI of form (which is the principle of being and perfection) (ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116])
- NI of form (by particular nature) distinguished from NI of matter (by universal nature) (ST I-II, q. 85, a. 6 [Leon. 7.116])
- Form inclines to its subject according to the mode of its nature (ST I, q. 62, a. 3, ad 2 [Leon. 5.112])
- Natural form is followed by NI (ST I, q. 80, a. 1 [Leon. 5.282])
• Every form has inclination whence proceeds operation (e.g., fire’s NI to upward motion) ([In II De anima, lect. 5, n. 8 [Leon. 45/1.88:104-117]])

D. Common: Substance

• NI of every thing, insofar as it is being and substance, to good and to something similar and convenient to itself ([ST I-II, q. 8, a. 1 [Leon. 6.68]])
• NI of every substance to conserve its being according to its nature ([ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2 [Leon. 7.170]])

E. Common: Parts and Wholes

• NI of part to expose itself for the good of the whole ([ST I, q. 60 a. 5 [Leon. 5.104]])
• Inclination of the part to common action conducive to the common good ([ST II-II, q. 26, a. 3 [Leon. 8.211-12])
• Any part, by a kind of NI, works for the good of the whole ([Quod. I, q. 4, a. 3 [Leon. 25/2.188:66-67]])

F. Common: Operation

• NI of a thing toward pursuit of object like itself (either following upon essence or upon supervenient form) ([In De hebd., lect. 2 [Leon. 50.274:299-309]])
• NI to do that which befits a thing according to its nature ([In De div. nom., cap. 10, lect. 1, n. 857 [Marietti 321]])
• NI of each thing to communicate its form to another and to seek its own good ([ST I, q. 60, a. 4 [Leon. 5.103]])
• NI of nature as active principle (e.g., of fire to move upward) ([ST I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 6.60])
• NI of nature as passive principle to receive action from an extrinsic principle (e.g., natural aptitude of celestial body) ([ST I-II, q. 6, a. 5, ad 2 [Leon. 6.60])
• NI of all things to their respective proper acts (and ends) ([ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154])
• NI of any thing to operation convenient to itself according to form ([ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3 [Leon. 7.171])
• NI of inferior things to submit to superior things ([ST II-II, q. 85, a. 1 [Leon. 9.215-16])
• NI of every thing to accomplish action commensurate with its power ([ST II-II, q. 133, a. 1 [Leon. 10.86-87])
• Every natural form has inclination whence proceeds operation ([In II De anima, lect. 5, n. 8 [Leon. 45/1.88:104-117])
• NI of a natural thing to be moved and to act ([Quod. I, q. 4, a. 3, ad 3 [Leon. 25/2.189:96-97])
• NI of each natural thing to its proper operation ([In I Meta., lect. 1, n. 3 [Marietti 6]])

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G. Common: Ends

- In each nature is inserted a certain NI to its end (In II Sent., d. 42, q. 2, a. 5 [Mand. 2.1084-85])
- NI is always in one mode, to one end (In III Sent., d. 33, q. 2, a. 3, ad 3 [Parma 7/2.977])
- Nature inclines to movement for the sake of some definite result to be obtained (De pot., q. 5, a. 5 [Marietti 142])
- NI of each thing to its proper end (In De div. nom., cap. 10, lect. 1, n. 858 [Marietti 321-22])
- NI to something extrinsic; NI to make something similar to oneself is through active qualities (ST I, q. 59, a. 2 [Leon. 5.93])
- NI of each thing to seek its own good (ST I, q. 60, a. 4 [Leon. 5.103])
- NI of every thing to the good of the individual, species, and the absolutely universal good (ST I, q. 60, a. 5, ad 3 [Leon. 5.105])
- NI of all things to their respective proper acts and ends (ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2 [Leon. 7.154])
- Nature inclines to whatever is becoming to it (ST II-II, q. 141, a. 1, ad 1 [Leon. 10.122])
- NI is to nothing except some good (De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:213-14])
- NI of each nature is to something similar and convenient to itself (De malo, q. 16, a. 2 [Leon. 23.288:210-11])
- NI of all things of the same species to the same unchanging good (De virt. comm., a. 6 [Marietti 722])

H. Common: Things To Which There Is No NI

- Because nature always tends to one definite effect, nature never inclines to movement for the sake of movement, but for the sake of some definite result to be obtained by movement (De pot., q. 5, a. 5 [Marietti 142])
- No natural agent can be inclined to that which happens by accident (De sort., cap. 4 [Leon. 43.234:185-90])
- Because every nature is good, it is impossible that nature have some inclination to evil (except under the ratio of a particular good) (De sub. sep., cap. 20 [Leon. 40.D77:76-79])
VII. DIVINE. This section comprises only the very few texts in which Aquinas attributes, or seems to attribute, a natural inclination to God or, conversely, divinity to natural inclination.\(^{16}\)

- That “God necessarily lives” as an example of NI (De ver., q. 22, a. 5 [Leon. 22/3.623:151-54])\(^{17}\)
- Inclination of Christ’s body as a celestial nature (ST III, q. 57, a. 3 [Leon. 11.531])\(^{18}\)
- NI in things as “something divine” (quiddam divinum) (In VII Ethic., lect. 13, n. 14 [Leon. 47/2.433:163-8])\(^{19}\)

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\(^{16}\) Thomas does not frequently attribute inclination to God. A notable exception is ST I, q. 19, a. 4 [Leon. 4.237]: “Praeexistent autem effectus in causa secundum modum causae. Unde, cum esse divinum sit ipsum eius intelligere, praexistent in eo effectus eius secundum modum intelligibilem. Unde et per modum intelligibilem procedunt ab eo. Et sic, per consequens, per modum voluntatis, nam inclinatio eius ad agendum quod intellectu conceptum est, pertinet ad voluntatem. Voluntas igitur Dei est causa rerum.”

\(^{17}\) This is the only text in which Thomas expressly attributes natural inclination to God. It is especially puzzling that he would use the necessity of God’s life as an illustration of natural inclination. If we understand inclination as appetite, it makes no sense to say that God has a natural inclination, inasmuch as appetite implies a lack or striving for completion. The use of sicut dicamus here suggests that God’s natural necessity is only analogous to natural inclination. Augustine does not use any inclin-term in the cited text, De civitate Dei V.11: “Neque enim et vitam Dei et praescientiam Dei sub necessitate ponimus, si dicamus necesse esse Deum semper vivere et cuncta praescire.”

\(^{18}\) St. Thomas is describing the position of certain Platonists who claimed the soul “is united to the body by means of light, which, they say, is a body and of the nature of the fifth essence.” ST I, q. 76, a. 7 [Leon. 5.231]. He rejects this view as ridiculous: “Quod fictitium et derisibile apparat, tum quia lux non est corpus; tum quia quinta essentia non venit materialiter in compositionem corporis mixti, cum sit inalterabilis, sed virtualiter tantum; tum etiam quia anima immediate corpori unitur ut forma materiae.” Ibid.

\(^{19}\) Thomas’s use of the word divinum here does not mean the created nature is itself God or part of God. See In III De cael., lect. 2 (“forma autem est quoddam divinum in rebus, inquantum est quaedam participatio primi actus”); In I Ethic., lect. 14 [Leon. 47/1.51:74-76] (“non enim dicitur aliquid divinum propter hoc solum, quia est a Deo, sed et quia nos Deo assimilat propter excellentiam bonitatis”).
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